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C.M.USHER

THE

LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE

OF

CHARLES MATHEWS,

THE ELDER,

Comedian.

BY MRS. MATHEWS.

A NEW EDITION, ABRIDGED AND CONDENSED,

BY

EDMUND YATES.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

NEARLY twenty years ago these Memoirs were first given to the public, comprised in four large octavo volumes, each containing above four hundred pages, and costing a considerable sum of money. At the sale of Mr. Bentley's copyrights, this book, with many others, became the property of the present publishers, who, mindful of former literary services (and thinking, perhaps, that the names of "Mathews and Yates," formerly so prolific of entertainment, might again be brought together for the amusement of the public), placed it in my hands with a view to the abridgment and condensation necessary to its publication in a cheaper and more popular form.

The genial author of "Peter Priggins" mentions a waiter at the Star Hotel, Oxford, who boasted of being able to pack a quart of wine into a pint decanter, and in my compilation of this edition my endeavour has been to emulate the extraordinary compressive powers of this worthy Ganymede, straining off the "thick" and rejecting the lees, but conscientiously preserving the real essence and *bouquet* of the liquor.

That the late Mr. Mathews possessed powers of graphic description in no ordinary degree is evinced by his brief autobiography and by his admirable letters; the former I have scrupulously left untouched, and of the latter I have omitted

none but such as were purely domestic in their character, and the publication of which, while justified by the close relationship and affection of the original editor, would not now possess the slightest interest to the general public.

All that may be good in this compilation must be ascribed to the industry and energy of Mrs. Mathews, the original editor, my own share in the production having been limited to the wielding of the well-known "pruning-knife," the dovetailing of incidents, reconciliation of dates, &c., in those portions which were retained, and the addition of certain biographical notes which have not the slightest claim to originality or erudition, but which are simply given for the information of those younger readers who, while wishing to know some particulars of the distinguished persons mentioned in the work, would be unwilling to take any trouble in searching for them.

Nevertheless, my task, though anything but an ambitious one, has still been a labour of love. That I should entertain an affection for the drama, its professors, and all things appertaining to it, is but natural: being the son of an actor, and, in the exercise of my own pursuits, being constantly thrown among persons connected with the dramatic world, it would be strange indeed if I were not animated by such sentiments. And, despite the mournful and constantly recurring wail of "decline," despite the garrulous whinings of the impotent, the ignorant, and the idle, I firmly believe that this feeling is common to a very large proportion of the English nation, who would be ready to admit that a clever and earnest actor has a greater hold upon their sympathies and an easier access to their inmost hearts than any man of equal talent in any other acknowledged profession.

The following records prove that patience, endurance, honesty, hard work, and a stout heart under discouragement, are requisites for the histrionic aspirant, as additions to his natural talent, without the possession of which none can ever hope to succeed.

Constant study and a long course of provincial training are almost as necessary to the actor as inborn genius. All modern examples go to verify this *dictum;* and yet, because each year produces a certain number of uneducated young men, who fly to the stage as a last resource, and who, having failed as tailors and grocers, fail more dismally and more publicly as *Claude Melnottes* and *Cassios*, we hear of nought but the decline of the drama and the degradation of its professors!

A perusal of this volume will show that one of the proscribed race was courted, admired, and recognised by the first and most brilliant men of the day, not as a buffoon for their amusement, but as an equal and a friend.

EDMUND YATES.

LONDON, *April*, 1860.

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THE

LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE

OF

CHARLES MATHEWS.

CHAPTER I.

My determination to write my life—Birth, parentage, and education; life, character, and behaviour—My retentive memory—My birth-place—My grandfather and father—Family disputes—Fanatic visitors—My face and figure when a child—Hannah More and Garrick—My school-days—The schoolmaster and usher—My precocious attempts at mimicry—A perambulating fishmonger—My imitation of his queer cry, and his revenge.

"He who pleads his own cause has a fool for his client," say the lawyers. I am afraid the writer of his own life is liable to the same imputation. I should have begun to write mine years ago, if I had had the courage. "On their own merits modest men are dumb,"—on their demerits they are not likely to dwell. What then is a poor fellow to do, who, with the terrors of the press before his eyes, feels it a sort of duty to himself to put on record a few remarkable events, anecdotes of celebrated men, hair-breadth escapes by flood and field, opinions of contemporaries, and various scenes in the drama of life in which he has been a principal actor?

It is not merely a record of my own adventures and mishaps—my life and opinions, that I am vain enough to think amusing; but some of those singular events which, contrary to all probability or my own expectation, mingled me with remarkable men. Few individuals have had greater opportunities afforded them than myself of associating or coming in contact with persons of every class of society, as I trust I shall be able to show. The original causes of such heterogeneous associations it will be my business to depict—but, from one chance or another, "they lay in my way," and I have known, visited, corresponded, or conversed with kings, lords, commons, merchants, traders; all, from the cobbler's stall to the palace, I have, like Asmodeus, con-

trived to enter—and, therefore, think I have at least the wherewithal to furnish an amusing work.

Well, then, for some years I have hoped the day would arrive when I should have the courage to "attempt my own life." I *really* have to plead the excuse of publishing "at the desire of too partial friends." I have been coaxed, wheedled, urged, tempted, bribed, goaded almost, to—begin. "Make a commencement at all events. Try; 'tis a shame—such stores of anecdotes—you will only have to copy, and instead of the dazzling white paper before you, you can shut your lids, while the eyes are turned within, and have only the labour of remembering, while others are battering their brains for invention." "Yes," said I, "true—but then the plan, the construction, the language! The public has been fed with such high dishes, that" —"They are more likely to be pleased with simple fare," said a good-natured, round, dimple-faced friend. "Ah! there indeed!" said I; "if I believed that!" "Believe it then from me; write fearlessly—nay, carelessly if you like." "What! with the terrors of the Quarterly and Edinburgh, *cum multis aliis*, before my eyes?" "You have nothing to fear from them, if you do not 'attempt' too much. Flowery writing, or metaphorical description, will 'confound you,' not the deed of writing as you speak."

"Well!" said I, "seriously, I am thinking of it. Begin I will, my—my—what? 'Apology?'—I hear a hiss at the word. 'Records?' already done. 'Reminiscences?'—stale. Well, then —Birth, parentage, and education—Life, character, and behaviour of Charles Mathews, Comedian, who was—Hang it! I have heard those words before, and precisely so arranged; but no matter—I will pursue that style of biography to the letter; it has sold many a sheet-list of all 'the unfortunate malefactors,' and perhaps it is not yet so damaged in the service but that it may be of service to me. I will begin with the birth, and pursue it to—nay, not quite to the last scene—I must leave that to somebody more alive to the subject than myself."

I have never written with a view to publication since I was sixteen, and have considerable doubt whether I am qualified for the task. I have resolved to put down rapidly the matter which my memory is charged withal, and shall risk the reading just as I should a letter written in a hurry to an indulgent friend, of which I had preserved no copy. I have never kept a journal or diary, or made a memorandum of a conversation in my life; but I have an excellent—nay, an extraordinary memory (an inva-

luable gift to one of my profession), and, having given public proof of this, I may venture to make the remark. I fearlessly pledge myself to the declaration, that I can perfectly recollect and repeat most of the anecdotes and conversations of remarkable persons whom I have met in early life, with as much facility as I related them at the time they happened.

Addison remarks, "that no one peruses a book with so much content, if he be unacquainted with the author, as when he is informed of his situation in life, his connexions, his disposition, and, above all, of his person." Now, knowing the misery of ungratified curiosity, I feel it my duty to proceed upon this hint, and shall therefore endeavour to afford every facility in my power to those who may do me the honour to read my life and experience, towards their full enjoyment of these volumes, by satisfying the most insatiable propensity for prying that ever afflicted the most curious and inquisitive of the human race.

I shall commence this narrative with "those early years wherein the human mind receives its first bias—when the seeds of all our future actions are sown in the heart, and when causes, in themselves so trifling as almost to be imperceptible, chain us to good or bad, to fortune or misfortune;" and, with this object in view, I hope I shall be excused if, in the outset, I dwell for some time on the situation in life, connexions, and disposition of others—I mean, of that excellent man, my father, and of the peculiar society in which he moved.

To begin at the beginning, then, I shall commence with my first birthday.*

I was born on the 28th of June, 1776, at half-past two o'clock "and a cloudy morning," at No. 18, Strand, London. The house, I regret to say, no longer exists, for in the summer of 1833 I had

* On a fly-leaf of the huge family Bible, the following memoranda may be found in his father's writing:—

After the heading of—

"James Mathews, his Book,
1765,

was born the 20th of July, 1742, and married to Elizabeth Manly the 21st of July, 1765, who was born in the month of June, 1744—

Heirs together of the grace of life!"—

may then be seen in regular succession the dates of the births of fourteen children—seven daughters and seven sons. Of the latter,

"Charles Mathews, the seventh son of James and Elizabeth Mathews, was born on June the 28th, 1776, at a quarter before three o'clock in the morning."

the mortification to see the venerable residence of my forefathers, the interesting birthplace of the hero of these pages, destroyed piecemeal by unhallowed hands, who, regardless of all its classical, poetical, and histrionic associations, demolished, brick by brick, every vestige of its former appearance, and "left not a rack behind,"—for what? Oh, bathos! to open to the public—a view of Hungerford Market!

My grandfather was a native of Glamorganshire, and the real family name was Matthew, which he changed, for an estate, to Mathews with one T. He died, leaving his property in litigation; and my father thereby lost a T and a Chancery suit. The estate was worth 200*l.* a year, and cost him about 210*l.* annually in law and repairs; so that its loss became a gain,—a fact, I take it, of no small importance to the world.

My father was a respectable, and what was called a "serious" bookseller—indeed, he was himself so rigid a sectarian as to have been selected to be prime minister at one of her chapels by no less a personage than Lady Huntingdon herself; so that it will be easily imagined I was not indebted to him for any of my theatrical propensities. He, good man, assured me that he had never seen a play in his life. His father, also a bookseller, was one of those persons who thought it sinful to enjoy innocent amusement, and his son was forbidden to be gay or mirthful. *My* father was obedient (my son cannot say as much of his father), and I have not yet sufficiently repented of my disobedience to add, "Alas! would that I had been obedient too!" "Just as the twig is bent," they say, "the tree's inclined;" but had I been so inclined, I might have been at this moment a "serious bookseller" also, for my father had designed me for his successor. But, as it happens in the best-regulated families, the husband and wife did not chance to agree—that is, upon religious points.

My excellent mother was strict in her adherence to the tenets of the Church of England; my father was a rigid Calvinist. Yet these differences of opinion, I must do them the justice to say, were conducted with such good breeding, that I do not recollect ever witnessing any unpleasant controversies. My father was satisfied with sincerity in any one; he allowed my mother to think for herself without opposing, still less persecuting, her for her opinions, and she, with most dignified church-pride, as some of the sectarians designated it, satisfied her mind by thoroughly, in her heart, despising the ignorant fanatics by whom he was surrounded—for surrounded I may call it—to the destruction of the well-being of his family. Had he been a professed gambler,

we could not have felt more alarm at the entrance of a black-leg into the family circle than the arrival of a newly-acquired *brother*. Yet he, the sincerest of the sincere, the most guileless, the most intrinsically honest and moral man, I believe now in my heart, that ever passed sixty-four summers in this sublunary globe, remained a liberal Christian amongst wretched fanatics, moderate in a crowd of raving enthusiasts—the mildest of preachers, the kindest of advisers, himself an example to the wholesale dealers in brimstone—the pawnbrokers, hosiers, butchers, shoemakers, travelling tinkers, no matter how low, how ignorant (blasphemers, I then and now consider many of them), to whose tender mercies I was constantly subject. A regular set of technical cant phrases pervaded the discourse of them all. I and you, my gentle readers, were damned, and they were saved; they had "had a call," or were "of the elect," and little other qualification was necessary to start as expounders of the word, and to spout nonsense by the hour.

Such were those by whom my father was hemmed in. Had he not been bitten by one of these rabid animals very early in life, his naturally cheerful mind and kindly benevolent disposition would have admirably qualified him for a contented, quiet, and happy member of the real, true mode of worship, as *I* think, and trust ever shall think.

But I have dwelt so long upon my parentage, that I have nearly forgotten the advice of the great Spectator, and the necessity of relieving the minds of the curious in minutiæ—"Above all, his person."

For a more exact description of this I have referred to my nurse, who was alive to tell the tale within ten years of the date hereof. She assured me that I was a long, thin skewer of a child, of a restless, fidgety temperament, and by no means regular features—quite the contrary; and as if Nature herself suspected she had not formed me in one of her happiest moments, the Fates combined with her to render me more remarkable, and finding there was not the least chance of my being a beauty, conspired to make me comical.

The agreeable twist of my would-be features was occasioned, as the above-named lady assured me—indeed, I have heard my mother with great tenderness and delicacy confirm it—by a species of hysteric fits to which I was subject in infancy, one of which distorted my mouth and eyebrows to such a degree as to render me almost hideous for a time, though my partial nurse declared my "eyes made up for all, they were so bright and

lively." Be this as it may, certain it is that, after the recovery from this attack, folks laughed the moment they saw me, and said, "Bless the dear little dear! it is not a beauty, to be sure; but what a funny face it has!" The "off-side" of my mouth, as a coachman would say, took such an affection for my ear, that it seemed to make a perpetual struggle to form a closer communication with it, and one eyebrow became fixed as a rusty weathercock, while the other popped up an inch apparently beyond its proper position. The effects remain to this day, though moderated. "Wrymouth" was a nickname applied to me when at school, and for the first seven years of my life I was in the habit of holding my hand to my cheek to hide the blemish. What good or evil "was here wrapt up in countenance," or how far this may have interfered to direct my future pursuits, I do not attempt to say.

I am now about to relate a circumstance which properly belongs to one of the "seven ages," namely, the first; but as my talent is not quite equal to that of the Irishman who said, "There's not a man in the four provinces has such a memory as me—I never heard that story yet but I could repeat it fifty years afterwards," I do not pretend to recollect what happened to me in infancy, yet am I correctly clear as to the description of the scene by my father. It was no less than the justly-celebrated Hannah More's introducing Garrick to him in his own shop. He had never seen him act, and therefore could not feel any of that glow that I feel in relating the incident—he had never witnessed, therefore could not appreciate his talents.

Reader! do you not, as I do, pity from the bottom of your heart the unfortunate victim of prejudice, who could voluntarily deprive himself of the effects of that resplendent genius, the admiration not only of England, but of Europe! What reward would you accept to be deprived of the reminiscence of the gratification afforded you by a Kemble—a Siddons—a Talma? Nay, had you been a play-goer till lately, and as suddenly converted as some of these would-be saints have been, would you not say—now be candid, "Well, I am glad I saw Mrs. Siddons first?" But whither am I wandering?

Well, notwithstanding this sacrifice of pleasure to principle, my father's pride was gratified that the introduction took place; and when the testimony to that great man's private worth as well as splendid talents was given, at the ceremony of depositing his honoured remains in Westminster Abbey, by the long procession of Lords and Commons that followed, an impression was

made on the mind of a trader that must have staggered his senses, and, in spite of the sentiments his misleaders had implanted in him, he used ever after to erect his crest when he related that he had had the honour of the great Garrick's acquaintance.*

As soon as my ears were susceptible of having the delicious fact instilled into them, I heard that on the occasion of the introduction—*credat !*—Reader, take breath—he, Garrick, took me in his arms ! Yes, I was touched, embraced, fondled by the immortal David! That I cannot describe my sensations will easily be believed when I state that I could not by possibility have been three years old, inasmuch as I was born on the 28th of June, he having made his final bow to the Public on the 10th in that same year (a fact I would impress on the numerous persons who during my life have pestered me with the question, "Do you remember Garrick, Mr. Mathews?" my answer having always been, "No, sir, I can prove an *alibi*.") Well, he took me in his arms, and, like the near-sighted lady who said, when a coal-scuttle entered the room in place of an expected infant, "Dear! how like its father!" no doubt made some commonplace observation; but my father often declared that he burst into a fit of laughter, and said, "Why, his face laughs all over, but certainly on the wrong side of his mouth !"

I do not go so far as to say this did or did not affect my future destiny; that my father in his serious moods alluded to it with such a feeling, there can be no doubt—it *may* have been ominous.

Hannah More† was at that time of a serious cast, as it is

* David Garrick, the greatest actor that ever trod the English stage, the first that struck the death-blow at formal and stilted declamation, substituting for it the vigorous and impassioned expression of natural sentiments, was born in 1716. He was educated at Lichfield, where he formed the acquaintance of Samuel Johnson, with whom he came to London in 1736. In 1741 he first came upon the stage, and his success was immediately established. He became the patentee of Drury Lane Theatre in 1747, and the remainder of his course, until his retirement in 1776, was one long series of successes. He died in 1779, and was interred in Westminster Abbey, where his monument, representing him between Tragedy and Comedy, is still a great attraction. In addition to his histrionic talent, Garrick was a man of considerable literary ability, a member of the celebrated Literary Club, and an intimate friend of Johnson, Goldsmith, Sir Joshua Reynolds, &c.

† Hannah More, a distinguished moral writer, born in 1744, died in 1833, having attained the advanced age of eighty-three. She was the authoress of very many moral and religious works, all of which during her lifetime enjoyed signal success. To the present generation she will perhaps be best known by

called, but did not quite believe that the association with little Davy endangered the soul. Whether she was of my father's principles or not I cannot tell; for to this hour I do not know what these Wesleyans, Whitfieldites, and Huntingtonians were disputing—nay, quarrelling about; nor why two human beings, believing in one God, should condemn each other to everlasting punishment, because their leaders gave different interpretations to the same text in Scripture. Miss Hannah, at all events, submitted some of her small religious tracts to my father, who published them; and I may presume from this that, as he was so employed by her, he declined putting his name to what she called her "Sacred Dramas." He held himself in such a situation personally responsible, though he did not carry his prejudices so far as to exclude from his shelves the works of our great English dramatists.

In due course of time I was sent to school—St. Martin's Free School was, I believe, the first. In the indiscriminate selection of a first school there are very few who reflect on its consequent effects in after life. Had I twenty sons I would never send one to the school of a man fond of punishment. I say fond, for I am convinced that my first pompous pedagogue had no gratification equal to the superintending a flagellation. "Let this little gentleman feel the rod!" I have the sound in my ears at this moment. Had flogging given knowledge, I might have been a dangerous rival to the seven Greek sages. But, alas! I did not flourish, though my master did! Often have I cast an eye to the little cherubs that clung on the corner of the organ at the end of the school-room, and wished I had been shaped like them, —only head and wings!

Our master, Pownall, was a remarkably handsome man, but pomposity itself. His usher, Shaw, a lank bony Scotchman—how can I describe him?—squinted "more than a gentleman ought." He had a barbarous accent, and therefore, I suppose, was selected to teach the "Breetish languitch in its oreeginal peurity" to us cockneys. He was a quaint man—thin as a pitchfork. He used to shamble up and down the school by slow fits, rubbing his gamboge chin with his burnt-umber fingers, and directing little bits of broken unintelligible advice to the leering, sheepish, idle little animals who sat in rows up the room, walking before them like Aaron with his rod.

"Cœlebs in Search of a Wife," and a little tract called "The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain," the original sale of which is said to have exceeded one million copies.

I was at that time particularly fond of carrying a bit of broken looking-glass, to dazzle "Shaw's queer optics" with. Many were the convulsive, painfully-smothered laughs I and my wicked coadjutors writhed under (while I remained undiscovered) at his simplicity and patience, enduring this infliction day after day, squinting up to discover through what cranny in the blind it was that the sun came in to occasion this annoyance; but at length I was caught in the fact, for, while I thought he was looking in an entirely opposite direction, I found he was looking me and my bit of glass full in the face. I was horsed, and now *really* flogged—barbarously birched; while Pompey Pownall roared out, with a voice of thunder, this facetious moral—"That, sir, will teach you, I hope, not to cast reflections on the heads of the school!"

Here may be traced my first attempts at mimicry. I remember the flogging fellows to this hour,—their voice, tone, and manner; and my ruling propensity was thus early called into action at their expense.

Another precocious attempt at individual imitation about the same time had nearly proved fatal, and, it might be supposed, would have tended to check that irresistible impulse I had to echo, like the mocking-bird, every sound I heard. I used to amuse my schoolfellows with what I then thought my best specimen in that way. It was of a man who cried eels about the streets, and passed through the Strand by my father's door daily. He was rather short, but remarkably muscular; he had a peculiar guttural voice, which I remember correctly to this hour, and which I can of course now delineate with more accuracy and truth than my then penny-trumpet voice could enable me to do; still it is quite out of the question that I can give any idea of such an original with my pen, when the whole humour of my delineation depends upon intonation: nor should I relate the anecdote, but to enforce my position of the wonder that I had not given up business in that line in the outset. This fellow's regular cry was, "Live eels! Conger eels! Thames eels!—try my eels—silver eels—Dutch eels—threepence a pound e-e-e-e-e-e-els!" which, taking a fresh supply of breath from his leathern lungs, he *eel*-longated to such an extent, that the last monosyllable frequently held out in undiminished force and energy while he strided from Craven to Hungerford street.

An imitation of this odd, perambulating fishmonger, I considered as most desirable. He was a notorious character, and excited various laughs, from the infant snigger to the adult roar; and

"What a long eel!" was the constant remark his drollery excited. Even my father's serious friends relaxed so far from their rigidity of muscle as to ha-ha-ha nearly three times at my successful hitting off of his peculiarities. Encouraged by this approbation into boldness, having brought my parody to perfection, I was emulous of the approval of the great original himself; and having due notice of his approach from the long eel on which he was trilling perhaps as far off as Charing Cross, I anxiously awaited his arrival. When he was near enough to observe my action, I placed my hand on the dexter side of my mouth, and commenced my sinister operations, taking him off "to the very life," as my panegyrists had led me to believe I could. Had I been as slippery as one of his own articles of traffic, I might have twisted and wriggled my way behind the counter and escaped; but he was too much for me—indeed I did not apprehend so savage an attack. Deliberately placing his basket at the door, he pursued me into the shop; and as I flinched from the huge and ponderous fist that was poised high in air to annihilate me, I conveniently placed my back to receive his blow. "Next time," said the huge monster, as he felled me to the earth, "as you twists your little wry mouth about and cuts your mugs at a respectable tradesman, I'll skin you like an e-e-" and seizing his whole shop up in his Brobdignagian arms, he finished the monosyllable somewhere about No. 27. For weeks—nay, months—did I suffer from the effects of this punishment.

CHAPTER II.

Methodist preachers: Brothers Hill, Durrant, Huntington, Berridge—Fanatics' Tabernacle in Tottenham-court-road — "The Oven"—Early bigotry—"Wrestling"—First love—Musical mania—Incipient yearnings after popular applause—Enfield races.

LITTLE daunted at my ill success in my first attempt, I commenced, previously to my knowledge of the actors, with the heroes of the pulpit. I was reckoned so expert at my representations of Brother Hill and Brother Durrant, Huntington, &c. that I have been requested, in some moments of hilarity (alas! they were but few), to exhibit my imitative powers before some of the stiffest of our visitors, and success crowned my efforts. My father was a joyous-looking person, and his jolly good-humoured face dimpled into delight at the "little dog's impudence:" I need not say I had ample encouragement from my mother in this pursuit.

My most successful delineation was of a huge-wigged old devotee whom we called Daddy Berridge. He had been a preacher in the Whitfield school for many years. He was a very old man at the period I speak of, and had lived long enough to see the progress of the Tabernacle in Tottenham-court-road until it had become a third larger than in Whitfield's time. I myself remember it before the addition of the gallery to the east end, and when the pulpit was nearly close to the wall; but when the new wing was added, there was an eye to the accommodation of a hundred or two more persons than it would formerly hold. These additional auditors, however, were necessarily only indulged with a back view of the precious wigs of the preachers: and those whose circumstances did not afford them seats in the new gallery were doomed to a dungeon underneath, dark and dreary, and well suited to the dismal predictions and fearful threats held out to all who were not of the elect. This recess was called the Oven:—no misnomer. The inexperienced of these comical clergy, who were not aware of the difficulty which the cakes in the Oven encountered during their baking,

as to hearing (seeing the preacher was, of course, out of the question), proceeded in the even tenor of their way, apparently unconscious of their presence, and certainly taking no pains to convey consolation to their consciences. But Daddy Berridge was a regular old-stager. He was well aware of the select portion confined in the black hole, and had no idea of hiding his candle under a bushel. He, therefore, when he had any choice bit of consolation for his flock, encored himself in his most eloquent passages. Turning his body entirely round in the pulpit, exhibiting his lank desponding visage to those of the gallery, who were delighted with this indulgence, and then dexterously elongating his neck to the prisoners below, he would roar out the repetition of his last sentence, which frequently reaching their ears without the context, could not, I fear, have tended much to their spiritual comfort. As in this instance—"If, with these examples before you,—if, when these truths are made manifest,—if, with these rules laid down for your conduct, and the consequences of your sins by such awful warnings made clear to you, you do not repent, you will all be damned;" he would elevate his guttural voice to a ludicrous pitch, peep down to the half-stifled wretches underneath, and cry, "You will all be damned,—do ye hear below?" This being all they heard of the sentence, they might very naturally have asked, "For what?" He would cite a string of truisms as to the uncertainty of life, the certainty of death, the necessity for preparation, and with pathetic tones chant out, "Since I last sojourned amongst you, my worthy brethren, the fell Destroyer has been busy. I can see before me the outward symbols of grieving spirits within—1—2—4—7—8—10—11—13—18—22 people in mourning"—(then wheeling to the right-about) "25—(left face) 27—9,"—then, to the Oven, "How many are there there?" Here again is the lack of manner and tone of voice, but I pledge myself to the truth of my description.

Before I began to have a perception of the ludicrous in these exhibitions, which perhaps would have been much longer in being formed but for my occasional visits to St. Martin's Church with my mother, Berridge's Johnsonian wig awed me, and I was strongly impressed with the belief that these Brimstonians were right, and all others wrong.

Notwithstanding my childish wonderment at these proceedings, I had a strong bias to proceed in what I have since believed the wrong path. I was, between the ages of eight and thirteen, as complete a little bigot as ever was begotten by gloom, envy,

and spleen, a thorough-going melancholy fanatic in embryo. My charity was that of the fraternity, for I not only believed in fire and torments being prepared for all who were not of "the elect," but most devoutly *hoped* it; and I think it fair to infer, if the doctrines which I heard produced this species of feeling in my mind, that such must always be their effect on the ignorant and uneducated. I shall relate presently an anecdote where these feelings came into full play. But first for a more natural as well as more amiable passion—incipient love.

About this period there was a little saint of the name of Chater. Brother Chater, her father, was a manufacturer of iron-work for coachmakers. I had "*wrestled*" with her at some of the love-feasts, and I was just old enough to regret we were so far apart during the *wrestling*. I therefore began to think I was in love. Gravity begets gravity, and my sister in the faith and I ogled each other most piously. The first time I ever attempted to *wrestle* with her in her father's house, I received a most mortifying check—not from herself—oh no! I was too young to declare my passion; but I had hoped to recommend myself to her regard and insinuate myself into her affections by the force of melody. The charms of music were summoned to my aid. I popped my flute into my pocket and paid her a visit. Her mother was gone to a "*T and B*" (Tea and Bible), and her father, as we hoped, with her. I had just prevailed upon my fair one to try a newly-published song on the pianoforte, while I accompanied her on the flute, when the enraged father rushed in, and, with all the meekness and courtesy which such Christians profess, called me by every sort of opprobrious name, boxed my ears, seized my hat, thrust it rudely on my head, gave one of his own sledge-hammer knocks on the top which forced lining and all over my eyes, and caused me to try to escape with the swimming sort of action peculiar to blindman's buff, pushed me from the room, and literally kicked me out of the house—and all because he caught me in the fact of playing "a song-*toon*" as he called it, and "corrupting his darter's mind" by leading her into the same sinful course. "Keep your devil's *toons* to yourself, you young varmin! don't come 'ere with your Beelzebub's jigs. None o' Satan's 'ymns 'ere! take 'em to 'is hown 'ouses—there's one close by in Common Garden. Shan't play none of your imperance to debauch my gal's mind wi'! Go out, I say! and I'll throw your fife out a vinder arter you." Brother Cahusac's patent keyed flute to be called *a fife!* "Barbarous blacksmith!" thought I, "never more will I endure the

wrestlings of your daughter after the indignity bestowed by your iron fist. Sweetest specimens of a saint-like coach-and-cart-spring maker, adieu!"

Was not this enough to check my musical studies in their early growth, to damp my ardour and destroy my enthusiasm for ever? No.

About this very period I made "my first appearance in public" at my father's chapel at Whetstone, where he preached every Sunday.

"Brother Oodard" (Woodward), the butcher, who was my father's clerk, suggested that a "hopposition to the horgan of the church," though in a minor way, might be attractive. He had a son "as fiddled," and Wilson, the cobbler, was reckoned a capital hand at the bassoon; "and if Master Charles would but jine 'em and play the flute," what an effective orchestra might be formed without trouble or expense! The scheme was immediately carried into execution; we had several "practizings," as Woodward called them, which made no little noise in the village, and our first public performance being announced by whisperings into the ears of the pious only (as we hoped), the meeting was crowded to suffocation—literally "overflowed," as the playbills have it.

Pope's "Vital spark of heavenly flame" was the piece selected for our *debût;* and I can as perfectly recollect as I can any event within one week of the time of my penning this, the arrangement I made for "a good part," as the actors would say; I mean, the care and caution I used to make the flute the "first fiddle;"—*flauto primo* was not enough for my inordinate ambition. Now, as this was a "*four-part song*," as our choristers called it, we expressly forbade the rest of the congregation from joining in until the whole had been sung through once, and then they were to sing chorus *only*. I had been a principal singer in this really beautiful piece of music before we aspired to instrumental accompaniment; but here came the puzzle. I had been *primo tenore*, and "Brother Wizzun" had a "barrow-tone" voice which he made bass for Sundays, I presume, by the old-established mode of getting his feet well wet on Saturday evening. The interesting elder butcher had a counter-tenor part. Our first notion was to accompany ourselves; but we forgot, in the enthusiasm of the moment, that those who had to play the wind-instruments could not conveniently play and sing at the same time. The junior slaughterer *Oodard* had here an advantage. Many a blind minstrel had given him a hint that to sing and

fiddle together was practicable; but *we* did not produce sweet sounds by force of elbow, but by dint of lungs, and I was emulous to exhibit my twofold accomplishments—I considered myself as the principal performer, and I would be heard. If I was to be merely an accompanyist, who was to sing my old part? At last it was agreed that the fame we had already acquired by our vocal performances was not to be compromised, and an ingenious arrangement was made to satisfy all parties. There were fugue passages, symphonies, &c.; and the cobbler and myself, with an enthusiasm never to be sufficiently commended, so contrived that we made some of the bumpkins believe that we sang and played at one and the same time. I wish it were within the power of my pen to give effect to this scene; it requires the aid of practical and vocal elucidation to convey it with full force.

This was a great musical epoch in Whetstone, the march of music at the first stage on the high North Road. It made a stirring sensation in our community, and I hoped, if not believed, that the Steepleites would be jealous: I felt persuaded that seceders from the Church must be the consequence. I was complimented by my saintly friends, and old Woodward was so pleased with my enthusiasm in the good cause, that he respectfully invited me to see a bullock killed on Monday at eleven precisely, "God willing." I wished that Sister Chater could have been present to witness the effect produced by the very instrument which her father had so contumeliously termed a fife. But his assault on the drum of my ear with his metallic fingers had been resented by my father, and the families never met afterwards. Our separation had cooled the ardour of my regard for her, and I soon discovered that I had not really loved; for I was almost immediately afterwards struck dumb by the beauty of another little saint in petticoats. She was exceedingly pretty and good-tempered.

Sister Hallows was the daughter of a rich ribbon-weaver, who had his country-house near my father's, and was one of his flock. I became as desperately enamoured as a boy of my age could well be, and am compelled now to confess that she was really my first love. I was constant; but "let concealment, like a worm in the bud," fester my heart—I had not courage, at sixteen, to declare my passion. She was three or four years older than myself, and never, I dare say, bestowed a thought upon me. I sighed at humble distance until she was torn from me by a ruddy handsome young farmer, and I left to mourn my loss unpitied.

I introduce this story of my seared affections here, as I so fully recollect that my eyes alternated from the notes to her beaming countenance, watching every expression, and anxious for her approving smile. Little did any of these parties think to what all this might lead! Trifles are the pivots on which turn all the vast wheels of that complicated machine called society. Had I never played the flute in chapel I might have remained in ignorance of the word fame, or its soul-inspiring power. Had I not received the plaudits of Whetstone bumpkins, I might at this moment have been addressing their descendants from the self-same tub. But I had a soul above tubs. These meeds of approbation so flatteringly bestowed upon my musical exertions were the first dawning indications I had of the value of applause. The seeds of ambition were here sown in my young heart. Emulation fired me; I had an immediate desire to rival the violinist. I occasionally had a ride in his cart as he went his rounds of Fryern-Barnet and Totteridge Green. I was envious of his accomplishments. He sometimes took his fiddle with him. I drove while he treated me with a "song-tune." Then, when he stayed long from his vehicle—sometimes "*a killing time*," while he poked a family-pig out of the world—I would seize up the instrument, and wish that "Heaven had made me such a fiddler!" I was too proud to be taught by him, and dreaded a refusal from my father if I petitioned for a fiddle. Alas! good man, I wronged him! I was not then alive to the liberality of his mind. How could I know, in those tender years, that he did not take his tone from those who were feeding upon him? I was not aware with what nicety of discrimination he separated the ore of pure piety from the dross of blasphemy and hypocrisy. He had no persecution in his heart—he breathed, preached, and practised charity!

The "flouters at our solemnities," the "Steepleites," as I contemptuously termed those whom I had not yet learned to respect, were of course an opposite faction in the village; and the customers of the rival butchers and bakers were almost all influenced by their party feelings and religious prejudices. The church-goers did not patronize Woodward, and the chapelites would not eat of the bread made by the episcopalian baker. The feuds created by this twofold persecution must be manifest. I seldom passed through the place without some petty insult. "Ah, there goes the Methodist parson's son!" "Ah, fifer!" "There goes a psalm-singer!" &c. Some of the rival faction had determined to kidnap me and carry me off *vi et armis* to

Enfield races. The plot was deeply laid—their plan organized with care. A Mr. Lawson, the son of a most respectable shopkeeper in the parish, with whom my mother dealt, though he did not go to chapel (for be it understood, that though my mother attended the parish church in London, she could not with decency appear to act in opposition to my father on his own ground, where all eyes were on her)—Mr. Lawson, then, who was a gentleman compared with most of those who joined in the conspiracy against "*Our House*," proposed to treat me to the races, and drive me there and back. He undertook to gain my mother's consent, and, to my astonishment, her "slow leave" was given; though the rest of the party had predetermined that, if not accorded, I should go without.

Behold me, then, at my first race! It would be absurd to attempt to describe now what I felt then. I do not affect to recollect the name of a horse or the colour of a rider; but I do remember that these "terrible, terrible high-bred cattle," being the first racing-blood I had ever seen, had such an inspiring effect, that I was then and there inoculated with a mania that has prevailed until this hour. Yes! lame and worn as I am, I admit no difficulty—I allow of no impediment—I am indifferent as to distance—but to the races I must go, whether Doncaster or Epsom, Leger or Derby. I have left Glasgow with the penalty attached of two nights' travelling, in order to be at Newmarket on Easter Monday, and have witnessed twenty-five contests for Derby and Oaks since 1803. I have frequently ridden on horseback from London to the neighbourhood of Epsom at night after my performance, to sup with friends, rather than encounter the dust of the roads on the "great day," as it is called. This will show that my enthusiasm is not abated.

Can it be wondered at that I, who had been debarred from any of the most trivial amusement or relaxation from school-fagging, should be dancing mad with joy at such an exhilarating exhibition, the first of any sort I had ever witnessed? But for my adventure.

The races were over, and my anxiety for return was immediate. I apprehended darkness, robbery, upsettings—my mother's alarm if I should not be at home by the promised hour. I urged all this to my companions, but in vain. They had not studied to amuse me only, but themselves also. The sports were now to commence with them. Then, as now, my pleasure for the day finished with the last race. All my enjoyment had ceased with the shout which proclaimed the winner. I was at

the mercy of the party, but I had faith in my protector and guide. It was agreed they must dine there, and go home afterwards. A booth was chosen, and dinner was succeeded by punch. It was no difficult task to intoxicate a boy of my age. I was hardly aware of the probable consequences of the tempting but treacherous beverage. They had resolved upon making me dead-drunk, and I hiccuped out, "No more! no more!" till I was nearly no more myself. All I remember from the time the bacchanalians ordered in a fresh bowl was their noisy chorus of "Drunk, drunk, drunk." My lifeless body was taken out of the gig and carried in triumph on their shoulders through the village, some of them singing, in ridicule of the music in which I had so distinguished myself, "Vital spark," &c. In this way I was chaired round the place like a successful member—like him receiving additional shouts when we passed the houses of obnoxious politicians—till, wearied with their midnight orgies, and their carrying me like Guy Fawkes about the streets, they shot me out of my triumphal car at my father's cottage-door.

CHAPTER III.

Merchant Tailors' School—Flogging—Serjeant Pell—William Mathews—Religious experience—Saintly epistles—Religious fanaticism—Pious tracts with odd titles—Huntington the coalheaver, and his miracles—Rowland Hill—Popular preaching.

I WAS now transplanted from Dominie the flagellator's garden of knowledge in St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, to Merchant Tailors' School, to gain what Pope so aptly terms "a dangerous thing," a little learning.* This was about the year 1786. Bishop, the head master, wore a huge powdered wig, larger than any other bishop's wig. It invited invasion, and we shot paper darts with such singular dexterity into the protruding bush behind, that it looked like "a fretful porcupine." He had chalkstone knuckles too, which he used to rap on my head like a bag of marbles, and eccentric as it may appear, pinching was his favourite amusement, which he brought to great perfection. There were six forms; I entered the school at the lowest, and got no higher than the fifth, but was of course alternately under the care and tuition of the four masters. Gardner, the lowest in grade, was the only mild person amongst them; the others had a little too much, and perhaps he had much too little, of the severe in him for his station. Two more cruel tyrants than Bishop and Rose never existed. They were great "deck-walkers," as I have always designated those public nuisances, who, regardless of the fidgets of poor nervous wretches like myself, mercilessly pace up and down apartments, inflicting pangs unutterable on those who dare not roar out, "Sit down, sir!" as old Sam Johnson did. Lord, the fourth master, was rather an invalid, and, I believe, had been prescribed gentle exercise; he therefore put up for, and was the successful candidate for, the flogging department. Rose was so great an adept at the cane, that I once saw a boy strip, after a thrashing from him, that he might expose his barbarous

* The most talented "entertainment"-giver of our days, Mr. Albert Smith, was also educated at Merchant Tailors'.

cruelty, when the back was actually striped with dark streaks like a zebra.

Before I left the school, the pupils had the satisfaction of witnessing the administration of the *lex talionis* in a most summary and somewhat awful manner. The boy I spoke of, like Zanga, remembered "the blow," and on proceeding to college, kept up the recollection of this most gratuitous barbarity; for, shortly afterwards, he came into the cloisters during a play-hour, went to Rose's apartment, lured him to the door of it, and horse-whipped him there before the admiring and approving scholars until he roared for mercy.

This gave occasion to the abolition of flogging in this school; for, the next time Lord made the attempt, at a concerted signal (the rebellion had been long in preparation), all the boys, to the number of two hundred, rushed from the school-room into the lobby, where punishment was usually inflicted, hustled the pedagogue, rescued the victim, and scattered the birch into fragments, each one carrying off a twig in token of victory. We then returned into school with perfect coolness, having announced our determination *unâ voce* never again to submit to such a degradation. To this arrangement the heads were compelled to submit; for so well was the spirited measure organized, and so completely carried into effect, that no ringleader could be pointed out as an example, and nothing short of the expulsion of the whole number could have been resorted to. The affair, therefore, was hushed up. There were young men from seventeen to nineteen years of age, just ripe for college—amongst them my brother and Serjeant Pell (in our eyes men), and other stout fellows—who swelled the ranks of the rebels.

William, my brother, was my senior by seven years, and, being intended for the church, of course looked to a college education. Thus did my father strike a fatal blow at his own peace. He created a mortifying distinction between the rank in society of his two sons—the eldest a gentleman, the youngest a tradesman. Having made up his mind to "cramp my genius" behind a counter, he was imprudent in sending me to a public school.

My dear and excellent brother had great natural talents, and was indefatigable in his search after knowledge. He was essentially a gentleman in all his feelings; and his earliest associates were high, if not in rank, certainly in talent. The pursuits that engaged him were not those of other youths; he was devoted to profound and abstruse studies, mathematics, and had an absolute thirst for languages, six of which he could speak or read before

he was twenty years of age. To gain perfection in these, his time was occupied day after day, night after night. The school exercises, of course, were only Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; French was supplied by my father's means; but at the time I was young enough to sleep in the same room with him, he rose at four or five o'clock in the morning to study Italian and Spanish; of which pursuits he was so unostentatious, that he threatened me with the penalty of his displeasure if I revealed to any one the hours he stole from sleep. Thus qualified at a very early age, he entered Pembroke College, Cambridge, already an accomplished gentleman.

If constant trials—if application—if marching and countermarching could have made a scholar of me, I ought to have been an Admirable Crichton. At seven I started for the east end; at eleven I came out of school, and went to another in the neighbourhood for writing and accounts, and to a French school in the evening.

On Saturday, during nine months of the year, I went to Whetstone, and stayed till Monday morning. This escape from all descriptions of fagging, and from confinement—this freedom of body and soul from the fetters of scholastic discipline—the contrast between the narrow dirty lane where the school was situated, and the pure air I breathed in my beloved little village, was such a joyous emancipation, that the impression has dwelt in my memory to the present hour; and I feel the same impulse to escape from London with all its attractions, and revel in country pleasures, that I did when I was a schoolboy. Indeed, every feeling, every propensity or peculiarity, I can trace to impressions formed in my school-days. During my first engagement in Drury-lane Theatre I lived at Colney Hatch, and in all weathers returned home after the play, about eight miles, and over Finchley Common, in an open carriage; this was from pure love of the country. Four years I lived at Fulham, and paid the same midnight visits, frequently on horseback, to my house; and fourteen years at Kentish Town (commonly called Highgate by my visitors, and not unfrequently Hampstead*); and I can truly say, that the same feelings pervade me at this moment. Without enumerating my list of objections to all large cities, and more particularly to London, I can only assert that I always turn my back upon it with pleasure when I have anything like rural enjoyment in prospect.

* Mr. Mathews' house was situated in Mill-Field-lane, which is just above Highgate Rise, on the hill between Kentish Town and Highgate.

What an almost universal feeling is the regard for our native place! I have no such sentiment, unfortunately, and yet I could never have been callous on such a subject, or have revisited the scenes of my childhood without emotion, associated as they were with the pleasing dreams of youth, of beloved relatives now no more, or partners in school-tasks now toiling in far-distant climes, or "seeking the bubble reputation." I feel nothing of all this on entering *my* "native village." Its huge masses of unfeeling brick and stone inspire me with frigid indifference as to the street in which I first saw light. 'Tis death to the sentimental. Ah! how different when the associations can be concentrated within the compass of a quiet, secluded hamlet! I never whisk through dear Whetstone in his Majesty's mail, that I do not gaze right and left on some object that brings to me pleasing as well as melancholy recollections of the past: I feel that this is in reality my native place.

How many there are who assert that our school-days are the happiest of our lives! The happiest of mine were in flying *from* school—when, feeling the value of my wings, I soared for two days weekly in the picturesque beauty of Totteridge and its neighbourhood, with the penalty, as I at last thought it, of a sermon of one hour and forty minutes from my father on Sunday.

I have already observed on my incipient fanaticism. It was not until my removal to Merchant Tailors' that I began to waver in my faith. The taunts of my schoolfellows, my mother's opposition, my brother's thorough contempt for the whole ignorant crew that he well remembered, first awakened my attention. On his visits at home during the Terms, my mother was always prepared with a budget of "gospel-grievances." "Gospel," that was the grand and leading watchword of the conspirators. "The Church of England clergy are not gospel preachers;" such was their cant. Then, again, the depredations on my poor father's purse — the subscriptions, the "mites for missionaries," the building and rebuilding chapels, the "accommodation paper," &c., were naturally sources of disgust to my mother. These vacation visits brought me in closer contact with my brother than I had ever been before, and the periodical pourings forth of a sad spirit, and the union of sentiment between himself and my mother, made me seriously incline to hear, if not devour up, their discourse.

The following specimen of style will suffice to justify my general assertions of the prevailing ignorance and indecent use of the

name of the Deity on all familiar occasions. The date of the letter, which is faithfully copied, will explain that I obtained possession of it many years after the period just spoken of, from my father, to whom it was addressed on the sudden death of one of his servants.

MR. MATHUS

MY VEREY DEAR FRINDS

I simpothis with you under this verey sollom providenc the deth of your survant, may our all wis Covenet God by His blesied Spirrit santefey it to Every one of you and my famley may owr gratious Lord fill our souls with the oyell of his gras that we may allwayes be redey We mest you last Nigt but the Lord wos with us may He Espeselly be with you and der Mrs. Mathus your der Child and famley under this Visettation prayes your ffnat Br. in a der Redemer.

IO HILL.

Dr. Ferean of No 3 Lams Condict plase tould me yesterday he wos goin to part with a good yong womon his housmaid if you thougt proper to inquier after hor you are welcom to maik yous of my Name.

6th Jany. 1804.

I am not disposed now to speak with severity of any sect or sects; there is good in all: but I have evidence of the hollowness of the many I knew, and I am positive that the persecutions of some of the persons I treat of drove me from my home, and my brother from his original profession. Their ignorance, their hatred of those who differed from them, their intolerance, and their scandalous mountebank tricks in the pulpit, I have a right to comment upon, and I shall die in the belief that such familiar uses of the name of the Almighty as are exemplified in the pawnbroker's letter are blasphemous; and the eloquence of the first advocate in existence cannot persuade me that these men were not in the constant habit of violating the third commandment.

My mother's visits to St. Martin's and other churches gave me many opportunities of hearing eminent divines, from which my father's pursuits would have debarred me. I was therefore a listener in public and private, between the ages of ten and seventeen, when my mind was somewhat capable of reflection, to the various and complicated tenets and doctrines of more than half a score of disputants, for all the persons I am about to name, with numbers whom I have forgotten, met at my father's house and *wrestled* most vigorously. From day to day they brawled, as if the best use to be made of religion was to quarrel about it; and what they were wrangling for I never knew, nor do I to this

hour. I had, however, the opportunity of hearing, amongst other eminent men and writers on theology, John Wesley, Romaine, De Coetlogon, Dr. Madan, Toplady, Rowland Hill, Cecil, Cadogan, &c. &c.; and they were among the first *gentlemen* I had seen. The clearly-drawn line of demarcation between these and the vulgar herd that embittered my life, and eventually drove me from my family fireside, added to my mother's example and high bearing towards them, and her sincere attachment to the Church of England, may account for my vacillations, and my ultimately settling down as a true and I hope sincere member of the established religion.

The bitterness with which I write of the canting hypocrites who infested my father's house will, I trust, be excused in consideration of the cruel persecutions I suffered at their hands. His was, in fact, a sort of house-of-call for sanctified fiddlers, holy hosiers, pious pedlars, and beatified butchers—for preachers of the Huntingtonian, Wesleyan, Whitfieldean, Cantadean sects. Lane at the Minerva press issued nothing but novels; my father was as well known for religious publications—he was the *serious publisher*. I wish I could recollect the titles of one half of these "pious tracts," as they were called: some of the works which he published are now in existence, and I have seen them lately; others I remember well, such as "Deep Things of God, or Milk and Strong Meat for Babes and Fathers in Christ;" "Nine Points to tie up a Believer's Small-clothes;" "Collins' Spouse under the Apple-tree;" "Hooks and Eyes for Believers' Breeches;" "A High-heeled Shoe for a Limping Christian." Some I, a profane person in their eyes, think too blasphemous to be recorded, and one of Bunyan's too indecent to pollute my pages with.

There was a coalheaver, one Huntington, a pretty specimen of the mechanics I have spoken of—he who added S. S. to his name, which he intended to mean *Sinner Saved;* but as even my father's waggery extended to another interpretation, I may venture upon it. He one night came home from a "Religious Experience and Christians' Confessing Benefit Club," and found Huntington making love to his cook in the kitchen—"basting her with the hoyle of salivation," as he said. My father, in great indignation, literally pushed him out of the house. I believe he gave him a kick, and as he sleeked his coal-black hair with his dusty paws and their ebony terminations, about to excuse himself, my father exclaimed, "William Huntington, *S. S. Sad Scoundrel.*"

The disgusting *sang-froid* with which the same Huntington used to speak of his actual colloquial intercourse with the Deity would not be believed if related by a mere hearer, had he not put it beyond doubt by publishing his blasphemies years after I heard him spout forth his fiendish threats.

I find whole passages, with which I used to amuse my schoolfellows in imitation of the Coalheaver, in his printed works. "He, good man! was ashamed of nothing;" and so he has put on record innumerable lies of his dreams, conversations with the Almighty, &c. In order to bear out my assertions of the infamy of this man, I shall copy two or three specimens of what I have repeatedly heard from him, as published by himself subsequently in his "Bank of Faith."

"During the space of three years," says this *Sinner Saved*, "I secretly wished in my soul that God would favour me with a chapel of my own, being sick of the errors that were perpetually broached by some one or other in St. Margaret's Chapel, where I then preached; yet I could not ask God for such a favour, thinking it was not to be brought about by one so very mean, low, and poor as myself. However, God sent a person unknown to me to look at a certain spot, and afterwards took me to look at it. God stirred up a wise man to offer to build a chapel, and to manage the whole work without fee or reward. God drew the pattern in his imagination while he was hearing me preach a sermon. I then took the ground, and the chapel sprung up like a mushroom. I thought, after such large proofs of my prayers being attended to, I would ask a few more favours. My surtout coat was got very thin and bad, and the weather at that time was very cold, and I felt it as I was going to preach, and I prayed secretly for a coat. As soon as I delivered my discourse I desired a young man to fetch my old great coat, in order to put it on before I went out of the warm meeting-house; when he came back, lo! he brought me a new one. I told him it was not mine; he said it was; so I put it on, and it fitted very well. In one of the pockets there was a letter which informed me my blessed Lord and Master had sent it to me to wrap my worthless carcass in during the very severe winter. I had thought, by my continual coming and begging so many things of my indulgent Master, I should weary him. My mock-modesty had nearly deprived me of this new great coat.

"At this time," continues the Reverend Coalheaver, "I preached at Richmond, Ditton, Cobham, Farnham, &c. This I found too much for my strength. I found I had great need of

a horse, so I went to prayer and asked for more strength, less work, or a horse. I used my prayers as gunners do swivels, turning them every way as the cases required. I then hired a horse to take me to town, and rode into the livery-stables near Margaret-street Chapel; but the ostler refused to take him in, saying he had no room. I asked for his master, and he told me the same story. I was then going out of the yard, when he asked me if I was the person that preached at St. Margaret-street Chapel? I told him I was; he burst into tears. He said he would turn one of his own horses out and take mine in. In a day or two he said some of my friends had been gathering money to buy me a horse, and that he gave something towards him. Soon after I got the horse, and one person gave me a guinea to buy me a bridle, another gave me two whips, another trusted me for a saddle; and here was a full answer to my prayer."

I wonder how many answers a man might receive in these days if he prayed that a saddler might be found to trust him under similar circumstances. But he had not half done with the credulous customers that were saddled—ay, and bridled too—by him. The Coalheaver, "set on horseback," still longed for something more; he would not let his dear master have an hour's rest; he bestrode his Bucephalus and rode home.

"I told God," he continues, "as I went along, I had more work for my faith now than heretofore, for the horse would take half as much to keep him as my whole family; but I lived and cleared my way just as I did before, for I could not then get anything either to eat or drink, wear or use, without begging it of God"—*i.e.*, he was too lazy to carry out coals, too stupid to make a shoe, found nothing was so easy as to preach to uneducated fanatics, and was not above spunging upon them all.

Often have I heard him repeat the passage that follows, which is nearly verbatim in his book, as far as my memory serves me—"Having now had my horse several weeks, and going a great way regular every Sunday, as might naturally be inferred, my breeches began to wear out. I often made very free with my master in my prayers, but he still kept me so uncommon poor that I could not get them at any rate. At last I was determined to go to one of my flock at Kingston that was in the breeches line, and to get him to trust me until my master sent me money to pay him." Is not this very like swindling?

"I was going to London that day, and called on Mr. Croucher,

a shoemaker (to diddle him out of a pair of shoes). He told me a parcel was left there for me; I opened it, and, behold, there was a pair of leather breeches!"

Now, what can be said or thought of the infatuated wretches who would visit this wretched buffoon to hear "the word," as they called it? Did any one of the "devil's children" ever utter anything in a theatre so calculated to bring the very name of religion into contempt as this? In his book he published the letter which accompanied the present:—

"SIR,—I have sent you a pair of breeches, and hope they will fit. I beg your acceptance of them; and if they want any alteration, leave in a note what the alteration is, and I will call in a few days and alter them. J. S."

Now hear S. S. reply to J. S.:—

"SIR,—I received your present, and thank you for it. I was going to order a pair of leather breeches, because I did not know till now that my master had ordered them of you. They fit very well; which convinces me that the same God who moved thy heart to give guided thy hand to cut, because he perfectly knew my size, having clothed me in a miraculous manner for near five years."

Often as I have heard this, I would not have ventured to offer it to my readers if he had not borne me out by his own printed testimony. If this be not the double-distilled essence of blasphemy, I know not what is.

If I were writing only the history of Methodist preachers, I could relate innumerable anecdotes of the absurdities, blunders, and practical jokes, &c., of these people, who have left the same impression upon my mind that a set of strolling actors would have left upon one of them, and about as much respect for their calling as such pretenders to religion would feel for the clowns and pantaloons of a comic pantomime. I have seen even Rowland Hill* (I believe a sincere and excellent man), who had the advantage of those I have spoken of in being a gentleman, guilty

* Rowland Hill, dissenting minister, as popular in his day as Mr. Spurgeon is at present, but possessing infinitely more education, natural talent, wit, humour, sarcasm, and withal earnestness, than his successor has the credit for, was born in 1744. He was the most zealous disciple of the celebrated George Whitfield, and was minister of Surrey Chapel for upwards of fifty years. He fitted his discourse to his congregation, illustrating the most solemn truths with the most ludicrous and commonplace imagery, yet so forcible in his reasoning and so pure in his life, that he was worshipped by his congregation and admired and reverenced by all who heard him.

of such violence in the pulpit, that the impression of those who were not accustomed to his oddities was that he was a maniac. Frequently I have seen him wield and poise in the air, and shake the Bible at his congregation, till he has dropped it amongst his auditory. (It was a common thing to see him stoop to pick it up within the pulpit.) I have seen him, while dealing out brimstone by the bushel and torments by the hundred-weight, knock the candles on either side out of their sockets. The pulpit cushion was another plaything: I have often expected he would throw it at me, and I perfectly recollect making the preparatory action of a cricketer as I exchanged looks with some of my companions, youngsters like myself, to catch it when he should hurl it from him in his enthusiasm. He who had the advantages of birth and association, and a college education, should have proudly maintained his station in contradistinction to the vulgar herd of "the elect," instead of being a kind of leader to them; but he was as remarkable as the most unwashed and uneducated of the set for the preaching-made-easy system—the reducing the sublime to the level of such understandings as theirs to whom they principally addressed themselves—the notion of making Divine truths clear to "the meanest capacity" by vulgar illustration. I shall mention only three or four of his most extraordinary attempts at effect in this way.

"The love of our Lord is like a good large round of beef, my brethren—you may cut and come again."

Again—"You all know how difficult it is to catch a pig by the tail; you will find it equally so to catch the love of our Lord after backslidings."

On an occasion of his preaching a charity sermon, he said, "I once got 1000*l.* by a charity sermon. I hope I shall get as much to-day. But observe, if any of you are in debt, don't put any money in the plate. Recollect—take time—deliberate. If any of you owe money, be just before you are generous. Stop though. On second thoughts, those who don't give will be pointed at. 'Oh, he or she's in debt,'" &c.*

* Since I wrote down these anecdotes, I made the following extract from a newspaper, Dec. 30th, 1831.

"Popular Preaching.

"As the Rev. Rowland Hill was holding forth at the Tabernacle, Tottenham-Court-road, a lady remarked the uncommon attention paid to him by a very old person near her. When the discourse ended, the attentive hearer exclaimed, 'God bless his heart, he is as funny as ever!'"

I remember Rowland Hill from my infancy. He was an odd, flighty, absent person. So inattentive was he to nicety in dress, that I have seen him enter my father's house with one red slipper and one shoe; the knees of his breeches untied, and the strings dangling down his legs. In this state he had walked from Blackfriars-road, unconscious of his eccentric appearance.

CHAPTER IV.

French school—Private theatricals—Master Elliston—First visit to a theatre, and its effect—Literary attempt—Mr. John Litchfield—Major Topham—William Mathews—"The Thespian Magazine"—Editorship—Death of Edwin the comedian—Correspondence with Mr. Thomas Harris, the proprietor of Covent Garden Theatre—Apprenticeship to his father—Macklin—First appearance on a public stage with Mr. John Litchfield—Richmond *at* Richmond—The Duke of Clarence and Mrs. Jordan—Second appearance in public—Canterbury—Last appearance in the character of a bookseller—Introduction to the agent of the Dublin Theatre—Engagement, and departure from home.

I now approach that period of my boyish days which is more intimately connected with my after-life. I have before hinted that my peregrinations from the Strand to Merchant Tailors' School four times during the day ended in attending a French school in the evening. This was kept by a Madame Cotterel, who had fled from the horrors of the French Revolution, and commenced teacher of her own language in England. Her scholars were few and select. She resided in the first-floor of a pastrycook's house near Bedford-street, Strand. The father of the celebrated Flaxman, the sculptor, resided next door, and Miss F. was one of my fellow pupils. In this evening academy the foundation-stone of that fabric was laid which, whether or not raised for the advantage of myself and the public, I must leave to posterity to determine. Here, most unquestionably, ambition for histrionic honours first fired my soul. I had never seen a play, and probably should not have rebelled against my father's authority and strict commands that I should not visit a theatre, but for this accidental association. I believe all the pupils of this lady had been indulged in this amusement but myself. Some three or four were panting for private theatricals, and amongst them, unluckily for my father's peace—hear it, theatrical readers, with some interest—Master Elliston! He was already a spouter, and I must own much more time was spent in English recitations from dramatic authors than in French exercises. I was fascinated by the specimens I heard, by imitation, of some of the great

actors, and scarcely knowing why, was insensibly led on to emulate these would-be heroes at the French school. This gradually ripened into an overpowering, all-absorbing passion. Elliston, afterwards so justly celebrated, was our prime leader; he was only four years older than myself, yet the distinction between man and boy almost existed between us, I being fourteen, and he eighteen.

Having with some difficulty obtained our mistress's permission, the play of "The Distressed Mother" was at length arranged and got up, and I made my "first appearance on any stage" at the theatre over the pastrycook's shop, first-floor front, in the character of *Phœnix*. Master Elliston enacted *Pyrrhus*, and *Orestes* was really well performed by a very interesting youth of the name of Leftley, a poetical genius who distinguished himself in many of the periodical publications of the day. Miss Osborne and Miss Flaxman were among the performers. But Elliston was our evening star, and distanced us all. It was a fine animated performance, and created as much wonder and elicited as much applause as the acting of Master Betty in later days. He was pronounced at once a theatrical genius of the first order, and his future pursuits in life fixed in the minds of all his auditors, if not in his own.

All I can recollect of my tragic attempt is, that it had an effect—a powerful effect. The audience laughed as much *at* me as I am proud to say they have since laughed *with* me. But I had not the advantage of my competitors; they had all seen many plays—I not one. Each had probably selected some favourite actor as a model, while the only specimens of elocution I had to form my notions upon were, with a few exceptions, the drawling, snuffling heroes of the conventicles. From this time I am free to confess that our studies were in some degree neglected, the English drama proving more attractive than French exercises.

At the age of fourteen I commenced author—at least as much so as many of our modern dramatists—for I translated the Princess of Cleves, which was published in monthly contributions in the Ladies' Magazine.

The following year we got up "The Orphan" (I the chaplain); Elliston was again our Magnus Apollo. His voice had had twelve months' more mellowing, and he gave a specimen of his vocal powers on this occasion by singing, between the play and farce, "To Anacreon in Heaven" at a table, with punch-bowl and glasses, while the scholars sat round as chorus.

A gayer specimen of juvenile jollity I have never witnessed. His joyous exuberance of mirthful enjoyment was worthy Bacchus himself: he looked the rosy god when he chuckled over

"The myrtle of Venus with Bacchus's vine."

His laughter-loving eye and round dimpled face were never displayed to more advantage even in after-days when crowded audiences gave their testimony to his mirth-inspiring comic powers; and to the praise and the good taste of our critics at the pastrycook's, be it spoken, they predicted his future greatness. Having a bad part in the tragedy, I stipulated for a character in the afterpiece. A one-act farce, called "A Quarter of an Hour before Dinner" (written by Mr. Rose, second master of Merchant Tailors' School, and often acted at the Haymarket), was selected, in which I enacted *Mr. Lovel*, and I have every reason to believe *without the slightest approbation*. I cannot now remember whether by slow degrees I had gained my father's consent to this, or whether it was kept a secret, but certainly neither he nor any of my family were present. Again he was unfortunate; for how could he, good easy man! have anticipated that the reward for his parental anxiety respecting my education should be to find himself thwarted in his best hopes, by my being initiated into the mysteries of Melpomene at a French Academy?

I have already stated that a public school was not calculated for a youth destined to stand behind a counter, and deal out "More Last Words of Mr. Baxter," "High-heeled Shoes for Limping Christians," and "Hooks and Eyes for Believers' Breeches;" for my associations there only gave me a distaste for such occupations, while at the tart and tragedy manufactory I imbibed an actual taste for other pursuits, and, instead of reading "Huntington's Sinner Saved" (S.S.), "Brother Hill's Experience of his Sainted Sarah," or "The Last Moments of a Pawnbroker's Laundry Maid," or other such tracts from my father's shelves, I selected the beauties of the living dramatists which nestled unheeded among the great mass of sermons and theological works. They heated my imagination, and, together with the lessons in the French nursery, gave me the most ardent desire to witness a play. On every occasion of my father's absence, instead of standing behind the counter I mounted upon it, and with a round ruler for a truncheon, red ink for blood, the kitchen poker for a sword, and a towering goose-quill fixed on one side of my hat, turned up for the purpose,

the skirt of my coat thrown gracefully over my left shoulder for a mantle, and a red tape garter encircling my knee, did I exhibit myself, to the great edification of his apprentices.

At length, on a certain, and oh, fatal night! a dark and gloomy night, suited to the perpetration of such an act of disobedience, with stealthy steps I trod my way. I dared not look right or left, so conscious was I of the "deep damnation of the deed;" but my soul was in arms, my time was my own, my will was free (my father had departed for Whetstone, his constant custom on a Saturday evening, to indulge his own pursuit), and I issued forth with my friend Litchfield, of the Council-office, from the bookseller's shop, to make my first *entrée* at a public theatre: this was in the autumn of 1790. Oh the delights of *that* night! that two shillings' worth of disobedience! My companion and I have frequently laughed over the recollection of my frantic behaviour. He could not pacify me. He had long been initiated into the mysteries of the scenic art; but here I was, at fourteen, "at my first play," which Charles Lamb has so beautifully described. The very curtain filled me with anticipations of delight;—the scenery, the dresses, the feathers, the russet boots, the very smell of the theatre, that mixture of orange peel and oil, the applause in which I joined so heartily as to bring all eyes and many remarks upon me, to the great scandal of my cicerone, filled my senses with delight. From that night my mind was in a state of splendid irritation; I could scarcely walk the streets without offering "my kingdom for a horse," to every pedestrian I met. *At night* I could not rest, Macbeth *did* "murder sleep;" and I recited Lear up three pair of stairs to a four-legged bedstead.

My thirst for dramatic fame was now of course increased tenfold. My next appearance was in a private theatre, as we termed it, over a stable in an elegant part of the west-end of the town, called Short's-gardens, Drury-lane. I hope it was rather more respectable as to its inmates then than now. Here I joined a society of spouters, and, having stipulated for the best parts, made my first attempt in comedy. Though Master Elliston monopolized all the attention and applause in tragedy, I thought that in low comedy I could beat him. I accordingly determined to astonish my friends by appearing in *Jacob Gawkey*, in "The Chapter of Accidents," and *Lenitive* in "The Prize." This must have been during the first season of that farce; and thinking that neither the audience nor myself could have too much of a good thing, I favoured them with about a

dozen imitations of the favourite actors of the day. Suett and Munden were pronounced to be near perfection. I cannot amuse my readers, as I hope I did my audience, except in relating one most absurd though appalling fact. In the commencement of the second act there are two cases discovered, supposed to contain Chinese bonzes sent as presents to *Mr. Caddy*. The first is opened and discovers the bonze to the delighted eye of the virtuoso. He then proceeds to No. 2, when he starts back with surprise at discovering *Dr. Lenitive* in a new dress, the caricature of the fashion of the day, who darts forward from the cabinet with his lottery-ticket in his hand, by which he has gained, as he supposes, 10,000*l*. During our rehearsals I was much distressed at the difficulties that presented themselves in the way of our obtaining these most important and indispensable adjuncts. The expense of making them was too serious to encounter; and as I was the person most interested, and most likely to suffer from their absence, I gave a sort of vague order to "knock up something" for the occasion. This was not attended to, but I was assured that something would be prepared and ready, when lo! to my horror and amazement, when I came out dressed in all my best, I discovered that the cabinet from whence I was to issue forth was a *shell* from a workhouse.

At this epoch my pursuits took a literary as well as a dramatic turn, and my delight when "The Ladies' Magazine" first exhibited in print "The Princess of Cleves, by C. M.," was boundless. I thought the eyes of all Europe were upon me, and that the ladies who took in the work would unite in calling on the Editor to insist on the author declaring himself. I erected my crest and craned my neck, as many a modern dramatist has done when taking to himself the compliments upon his new play, properly due to the Messrs. Scribe and Co. My friend Litchfield, afterwards husband of the actress of that name, who first displayed to me the splendours of Melpomene, was shortly after that period connected with the press. My brother also added to the income my father allowed him by contributions. "The Oracle" was a new paper, and Topham, Parson Este, Hewerdine, and a little clique of the elect, started a paper called "The World." Litchfield wrote the dramatic articles occasionally for both, under the signature of "Pollio," and I believe these were allowed to be the best criticisms of the day. My brother was for a time parliamentary reporter to these and others; I therefore was insensibly enticed into this knot of literati, and initiated into the mysterious arcana of diurnal

despotism. Captain, afterwards Major Topham, was a most prominent character on the canvas. I remember his appearance well—a scarlet coat, a cocked hat, a large door-knocker of a tail appended to a carefully-powdered head, that seemed to invite you to give a rat-tat on his scarlet and white shoulders, and inquire if the editor of "The World" was within; his knuckles crammed into his pockets, out of one of which peeped a short but very thick stick, enough to show that he was prepared for an attack. Lewis dressed at him in Reynolds' comedy of "Notoriety," and had two lines in his epilogue, which were evidently personal, and were always vociferously applauded:—

> "Hey, Tom, how do? Oh! is that you, Dick Docket?
> You've stole my stick! Oh, no! it's in my pocket!"

Boaden, the author of the Life of Kemble, Mrs. Siddons, Mrs. Inchbald, &c., was the editor of "The Oracle," and a celebrated dramatic critic. He was enthusiastically devoted to the Kemble family, and on terms of intimacy with "Glorious John." To these men I looked up as arbiters of the fate and fame of many a Thespian hero. In all the freshness of youth, when impulses burst forth without disguise, it was natural that, on associating with these men, I should mistake inclination for ability—endeavour to emulate their example and become one of them.

"The Thespian Magazine" (entirely devoted to the drama—I need give no other reason for its decline and fall) was first edited by several of my friends, and I commenced dabbler, and afterwards editor; but the pay was so contemptibly small (a guinea per month), that it soon fell into other hands. During my editorship appeared my first attempt at criticism. I was blockhead enough, after having seen only about a dozen plays, to imagine myself qualified to write upon the subject, and censure those who had devoted their minds and lives to the study of their art. I was willing, though not able to be, as Coleridge forcibly styles such persons, of "the animalculæ that feed upon the bodies of genius."

In the year 1790 the great comedian Edwin died, and had I been a bad boy and stolen to the theatre during that summer when he was acting at the Haymarket, I might have gained many a hint that would have turned to my advantage in after times; but he died in August, and my first play was in September, so that I lost the opportunity of witnessing the extraordinary comic efforts of that great actor, and have ever since

lamented that I should have been so tardy in my disobedience. To give an idea, however, of my peculiar modesty at this period, the news of poor Edwin's demise was no sooner made known than I made up my mind, inexperienced and ignorant as I was, to succeed him. I lost no time in writing to Mr. Harris, the proprietor of Covent Garden Theatre, tendering my services for his situation. I luckily preserved a copy of my absurd letter, and have also carefully cherished Mr. Harris's reply in evidence of my own vanity and folly:—

"Sir,—The lamented death of Mr. Edwin making an opening in your establishment, inspires me to offer myself as a candidate to supply the vacancy. I have never performed in any public theatrical representation yet, having been much engaged in business, but I trust this will not operate against me. I already am perfect in *Lingo* and *Bowkitt*, and know more than half of *Old Doiley*. Salary is no object, as I only wish to bring my powers into a proper sphere of action. I do not wish to blaze out awhile and then evaporate. Being at present bound to my father and under indentures,* of course his consent will be necessary; but this is the only impediment I am aware of. Your immediate answer, if convenient, will be of great consequence to,

Sir, your obedient servant, C. M."

Mr. Harris's reply was simply as follows:—

"Sir,—The line of acting which you propose is at this time so very well sustained in Covent Garden Theatre, that it will not be in my power to give you any eligible situation therein.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant, T. Harris."

In justification of this gentleman's rejection of my valuable services, and in confirmation of my vanity, I have only to add, that those excellent actors, Messrs. Munden and Fawcett, were deservedly established favourites in the line to which I aspired.

Had I never turned manager myself, I should have been under the mortifying impression of being the only silly boy that could be guilty of such folly; but I have since collected stores of such specimens of harmless stupidity, many of them addressed to myself. However, I was not to be stifled in my theatrical cradle; I bought a pot of rouge and kept it in my drawer of best clothes, though I had no chance of using it, and burnt all my father's corks, and put them by against the time I should want eyebrows. Low comedy flamed high within me, *Lingo* danced in my imagination, and *Old Doiley* raged in my soul.

* Every frequenter of the "At Homes" will recollect his fine personification of the celebrated John Wilkes, before whom he appeared with his father on the occasion of his apprenticeship.

The former I used to go through, with all the songs, to my father's apprentices and servants, with the most complete and triumphant success. I procured a wig resembling Edwin's, as I guessed from portraits of him, and sung the songs in imitation of imitations I had heard of him.

Here a blank is left in my husband's narrative, after a pencilled name, which from memory I fill up. I have heard him relate the following account so often that, though I may not be able to give it so humorously as he would have done, I can yet tell it truly :—

At this time the aspirant sought an interview with the celebrated Charles Macklin,* who had then attained a hundred years and upwards. He had been recommended to recite to him for the purpose of gaining the veteran's opinion and instructions; and, going by appointment to the residence of the aged man in Tavistock-row, he found him ready to receive him. When the door was opened, and the youth announced, there was Macklin in his arm-chair, from which he did not attempt to rise, nor, indeed, take any notice of the entrance of the stranger, but remained with an arm on either elbow of the chair he sat in, looking sour and severe at his expected pupil, who, hesitating on the threshold, paused timidly, nay fearfully, which occasioned the centenary to call out, in any but inviting tones, "Come *nearer!* What do you stand *there* for? You can't act in the gap of the door!" The young man approached. "Well," added Macklin, in a voice ill calculated to inspire confidence, "don't be *afraid!* Now—let me hear you." This crabbed austerity completely chilled the aspirant's ardour; however, mustering up all the confidence this harsh reception had left him, he began to declaim according to the approved rules of "speech-days." Macklin, sitting like a stern judge waiting to pronounce sentence upon a criminal, rather than to laud a hero, soon interrupted the speech with a mock imitation of the novice's monotonous tones, barking out, "Bow, wow, wow, wow!" This was enough to damp the Thespian flame which had lighted the poor youth into the presence of the terrible old man, and he felt him-

* Charles Macklin (real name MacLaughlin), actor and dramatist, born in 1690, first appeared in London in 1725, specially celebrated for his performance of the character of *Shylock*. His best-known comedy is "The Man of the World," which still keeps the stage. He died in 1797, aged one hundred and seven.

self unable to make another essay, but stood, with downcast eyes and swelling heart, awaiting the verdict which he expected. At last Macklin, with increased severity of manner and voice, asked (poking his head forward at the same time, as if to impress his question the more strongly)—"*Young man*, are you at all aware what the qualifications of an actor should *be?*" The youth sighed out, "I believe *not*, sir."—*Macklin.* "No, I am *sure* you are not. I will tell you, then, *sir*" (poor Charles Mathews had never in his life before been called "sir," and it seemed to him an awfully responsible word at that moment)—"I will tell you what he *ought* to be; what *I* was, and what no man was ever eminent without being. In the first place, an actor ought to possess a fine, an expressive *eye*—'an eye like Mars, to threaten and command.'" (His own flatly contradicted his assertion.) "*Sir*, he should have a beautiful countenance." (Charles looked up at his; but so many lines had crossed what of beauty might have once been written there, that nothing of it was legible.) "He should be able to assume a look that might appal the *devil!*" (Here, indeed, he had *one* requisite in full force.) "He should possess a fine, clear, mellifluous voice!" (alas! his own sounded like a cracked trumpet)—"a graceful figure, *sir.*" (The lean and slippered pantaloon was an Apollo Belvidere to Macklin.) "But, above all, young man"—(and here the speaker's tone deepened into something like solemnity)—above all, an—actor—should—possess—that—first—great—natural—requisite—that—test—of—genius—a good—good—*sir*," (added he, in a loud and angry voice, as if commanding assistance)—"I want a *word!*—he should, I say, possess a good—retentive—" "Memory!" cried out the young man. "Ay, sir, *Memory.*"

Here the old man seemed to dwell for a while pensively upon the attribute just *lent* to him; then rousing himself from his thoughtful posture, he looked up in his visitor's face, as if inquiring what he did there? "Well, sir?—oh! well, well,"—(as if rising from the abyss of forgetfulness)—"as I have said—an actor's requisites are many. Amongst the rest, *discrimination.* Sir, in the course of my long life I never knew more than three actors who possessed discrimination. David Garrick was *one,—I, Charles Macklin*, another, and the third was—a—a—a—." (Here his voice sank, as if step by step, till it reached a landing-place, where it was stationary and mute for some seconds; he then added, in a sort of mental soliloquy, and with a half sigh, "I *forget* who was the other!" Then, closing his eyes, he sank back into his chair, as if asleep, and was cer-

tainly unconscious of the exit of the young Thespian, who, shutting the door quietly after him, flew down stairs like a lapwing, opened the street-door, and ran away rejoicing in his escape, as if he feared the sour old man, who had curdled his blood with his severity, would have shut him up for life in his dreary presence.

Mr. Mathews had not, however, seen him for the last time; for, before he left home for Dublin, he was seated next to Macklin in the pit of one of the theatres, when, totally unmindful that he had ever met the youth before, he addressed him on the occasion of an actress, of a certain age, performing a youthful hoyden, and affecting the lightness and agility of girlhood. Macklin *ought* to have known her—(she was either *Miss* or *Mrs. Pope;* both of the old school)—but that he had confessedly lost an actor's great requisite, memory; and he asked his neighbour the name of the lady, who seemed to amuse him, several times in the course of the performance. At last, on her more than ordinary display of agility, Macklin turned round and observed, in a voice that seemed to issue from a cavern, "Sir, that lady jumps very *high*, but she comes down very *heavy*."

Autobiography resumed.

From this period I remained at Merchant Tailors' School; and, during vacation time and leisure hours, "served in the shop," as Brother Hill would have said. Dick, in Murphy's "Apprentice," was a mere type of me. He neglected only the shop in pursuit of his spouting propensities, but I forgot counter, cloisters, chapel, father, mother, all; and my master-passion led me at length to an act of open rebellion. I began more than to suspect that the managers of the theatres would not engage a raw inexperienced youth, merely to gratify his silly ambition, when, to my great delight, I heard from Litchfield, who was quite as stage-struck as myself, that the manager of the Richmond Theatre would allow any young gentleman to perform who would pay him ten guineas. What condescending liberality! How could he ask a smaller sum? I negotiated with him; and had the great good fortune to bring the potentate to even more moderate terms, namely, that he would allow *two* young gentlemen to perform for fifteen. This I communicated with great glee to my brother enthusiast, who had ambition enough to aim at the highest honours of the art at once. He jumped at the

proposal, and declared himself ready studied in "Richard the Third."

Now, it so happened that I had a passion for fencing which nothing could overcome; and this friend of Melpomene and mine learnt the exercise at the same academy with myself. Therefore, for the delight of exhibiting my skill and legitimate love of the art, I kindly consented to take the inferior, insipid part of *Richmond*, who does not appear until the fifth act of the play, I stipulating, however, for a good part in the after-piece. I cared for nothing except the last scene of *Richmond*, but in that I was determined to have my full swing of carte and tierce. I had no idea of paying seven guineas and a half without indulging my passion. In vain did the tyrant try to die, after a decent time; in vain did he give indications of exhaustion; I would not allow him to give in. I drove him by main force from any position convenient for his last dying speech. The audience laughed: I heeded them not. They shouted: I was deaf. Had they hooted, I should have lunged on in unconsciousness of their interruption. I was resolved to show them all my accomplishments. Litchfield frequently whispered, "Enough!" but I thought with Macbeth—

"Damn'd be he who first cries, Hold! enough!"

I kept him at it; and I believe we fought almost literally "a long hour by Shrewsbury clock." To add to the merriment, a matter-of-fact fellow in the gallery, who in his innocence took everything for reality, and who was completely wrapt up and lost by the very cunning of the scene, at last shouted out, "Damn him! why does not he shoot him?"

His present Majesty, William IV., was in a private box, with Mrs. Jordan, on this occasion, having been attracted from Bushy by the announcement of an amateur *Richard;* and I heard afterwards, that they were both in convulsions of laughter at the prolongation of the fight, which that most fascinating and first of all great comic actresses never forgot. Years after, when we met in Drury-lane green-room, I was relating, amongst other theatrical anecdotes, the bumpkin's call from the gallery in commiseration of the trouble I had in killing *Richard*, when she shook me from my feet almost, by starting up, clasping her hands, and in her fervent, soul-stirring, warm-hearted tones, exclaiming, "Was that *you? I was there!*" and she screamed with laughter at the recollection of my acting in *Richmond*, and

the length of our combat. She thought it was my friend's love of acting that induced him to spin it out. She was loud in praise of his personation of *Gloster;* and a very sensible, judicious reading of the character it doubtless was. The farce was "The Son-in-law." He enacted *Arionelli*, the opera-singer, a singular effort after so arduous a part as *Gloster;* but he acquitted himself with credit. I attempted, after my fencing mania had been satisfied, to dance myself into favour in the character of *Bowkitt*, in that most whimsical afterpiece. Here I had an opportunity afforded me of exhibiting a third accomplishment. Having convinced *in Richmond* all the people *at* Richmond that I could fence, and in *Bowkitt*, that I was *maître de danse*, I satisfied them that my musical education had not been neglected. The incipient Paganini delighted the audience by a country-dance tune on the *kit*.*

[In my husband's notices of his early career, he has not put down his second attempt upon a public stage, the particulars of which, as I clearly recollect them, may properly be related in this place.

Early in 1794, he and his fencing friend (Mr. Litchfield) prevailed upon another liberal manager to permit them to pay a sum of money to perform at Canterbury, where "Richard the Third" showed them in their former glory, as *Richard* and *Richmond*. The latter, from pure love of fighting (like *Sir Lucius O'Trigger*), was once more performed by the comedian, who afterwards, from equal love of acting, played *Old Doiley*, in the farce of "Who's the Dupe?"

The requisite reserve with their mutual friends (for Mr. Litchfield's family had also a dash of seriousness in it) pre-

* The following criticism upon his performance I have found in a London paper, dated Monday, Sept. 9th, 1793.

"*Richmond Theatre.*

"'Richard the Third' was on Saturday evening represented." After great eulogy upon the performance of Mr. Litchfield in *Richard*, the criticism concludes:—

"Another gentleman also made his first appearance in a theatre the same evening, as *Richmond* and *Bowkitt*. Fear depressed his voice in the former part, and in the latter he frequently spoke too indistinctly to be heard in the distant seats. He manifested some *naiveté*, however, in the *Dancing Master*, and trod the boards with free and easy steps. Had he combatted with a less powerful rival, his attempt had been better justified; as it was, he did not disgrace the company he performed with."

cluded these young men from completely indulging their vanity, by carrying with them any admiring witnesses of their triumphs; so that they were driven to the expedient of inviting "mine Host" of the *Fleur de lis*, where they put up, to go and see the performance, who graciously consented to accept a ticket.

In spite of remonstrance from his coadjutor, and consciousness of former ridicule, *Richmond* resolved again to prolong the last struggles of the tyrant; and when *Richard* fell, he poked him up, in the same spirit with the boy in "The Children in the Wood," who says to *Walter*, after he has killed *Oliver*, "Kill him again! such a villain cannot be too dead!" and recommenced the attack. Thus the combat lasted as long as before, and the two fencers gained much applause, without the laughter with which the Richmond folks treated them. On the contrary, the good people of Canterbury enjoyed the stubbornness of the contest, and their interest in it was manifested by repeated cheers at *Richard's* skill in parrying such vigorous and persevering attempts to put him out of the world. They were in fact delighted to see him die hard; while it was evident that, had he a thousand lives, *Richmond's* "great revenge had stomach for them all." In fine, the curtain dropped under shouts of approbation from the discerning few; and the two stars lighted each other home, eager to receive the private meed of their exertions, from a quarter whence they were especially due.

After a few minutes, "mine host" placed their supper upon the table with great care and precision: but not one word did he speak. The tired performers sat down, but did not find the food they required. They hungered and thirsted for praise, for which they had a craving—nay, an insatiable appetite. The best carver cut up the chicken more as a form than from a desire to eat of it; and in the course of the operation put several leading questions to the silent landlord. Still nothing satisfactory was elicited. As soon, however, as he and the waiter had carried off the remnants of the supper, which at last the guests had fallen upon in earnest, from the wish to detain their host, they invited him to return for the purpose of taking some punch with them. In due time he re-entered the room with a pipe lighted, and sat himself down to enjoy the offered glass. Now then was the time. Several fishing-lines were thrown, but not one compliment did they hook: at last, the friends tacitly agreed to discard all finesse, and fairly drag out with a net the prey they were so determined on securing. *Richard* asked resolutely, "Pray, Mr. ——, how did you like the tragedy?"

The landlord paused, with his eyes downcast, after the approved manner of smokers; and, puff—puff—puff, was the only reply. "How," said the comedian, who was impatient, "how did you like the farce?" Puff—puff—puff, again (but not one puff for the actors). The question was then put into a more peremptory and determined form: "Pray tell us really what you thought of our acting?" There was no evading so direct an attack. The landlord looked perplexed, his eyes still fixed upon the ground; he took at length the tube slowly from his mouth, raised his glass, and drank off the remnant of his punch; went to the fireplace, and deliberately knocked out the ashes from his pipe; then looking at the expectants for a minute, exclaimed in a deep though hasty tone of voice, "D—d good fight!" and left the room. Sir Oracle having thus oped his mouth, not one word more could be extracted; and to this day his opinion upon the rest of the performance remains a sealed mystery.]

Autobiography resumed.

My future fate was now sealed. To buckle to business after tasting of public applause was not within the boundaries of probable expectation. My first act of open rebellion was accompanied by an assault in the eye of the law. From the age of fourteen until the period at which I now arrive, I occasionally served in the shop during the holidays. A purse-proud, vulgar customer of my father's, who never would condescend to alight from his carriage, exacted of me, "the shop-boy," the most degrading of all duties, that of carrying articles to a carriage. I had been sent backwards and forwards in the rain too often to agree with my irritability, when, goaded into madness by his haughtiness, I felt at once that I never could suit myself to such purposes. "This is the second edition, I want the first:" again I returned to the shop. "This is bound in russia, calf-gilt will do for me. The boy's a fool!" said he, and then I threw the book in his face. This was about "my last appearance in that character."

Destiny, a word so often repeated by Napoleon, now began to develop her plans. I could not resist my fate. Early in the year 1794 I had made up my mind to make the stage my profession, and began to ponder upon the when, the where, and the how, when chance threw in my way Hitchcock, who wrote the "History of the Irish Stage." All authors upon such subjects

were welcome to me; and, after an introduction, I heard with great delight that he was a sort of Serjeant Kite to the Dublin corps of Thespians, and was now in London beating up for recruits: in short, I enlisted. He did *not* give me a shilling, and I believe never would if he could with decency have avoided it. I was fairly kidnapped, after all, inasmuch as it was quite clear that the Irish agent, as he was termed, had no power to fulfil the flattering promises he had made to me. It is true I was inexperienced, but this he knew. I did not deceive him, and I never swerved from my original inclination. I stipulated as far as possible for what is termed low comedy; for I had no pretensions to anything above that. Tragedy I never dreamed of. Why he engaged me at all was a puzzle to me when I had leisure for repentance in Dublin. My salary was to depend on my success. Could I doubt that it would be liberal? It was agreed that I should join the corps in Dublin at the latter end of May, 1794.

I had now a scene to encounter that required some little courage to support—namely, to break the intelligence to my father that I had determined to quit the parental roof, and follow the stage as a profession. He was in some measure prepared for the blow. I requested him to cancel my indentures of apprenticeship. "At all events," said I, "I am resolved to quit this house."

"You will live to repent this act of disobedience," said he.

"I doubt it, dear sir: 'my fate cries out.'"

"Don't shock my ears, sir, with such language," said my father.

"'Tis Shakspeare's, sir; I have heard you quote him."

"I was unconscious, then," said he.

"No, sir," said I: "you did him but justice when you defended yourself from the attack of one of your bigoted brothers, by saying the words you used were certainly from the works of an inspired writer."

"Do not be profane, sir."

"Far from it, my dear father, 'I speak it not profanely;' but I cannot be persuaded that the magnificent mind which seems to have unclosed the book of fate, and penned lessons of morality for all ages, could have been so directed by the mighty Mover of all, if in his sight such productions were so wicked as you believe them to be. I can endure no longer the tyranny of those I consider as rebels. They are avowed enemies to the established religion of the country. Besides, if I am to believe

them, they are too good for me. I am embarrassed in their presence—I feel my own nothingness; I, a sinner, shrink from such purity."

"Your sneering at those good men shows how well you are qualified for the profession you have chosen," replied my father.

"There are some gentlemen, at least," said I, "in that profession; not one amongst those who have driven me from home. Let me fly from these noxious reptiles—these persecutors and slanderers—'I banish them.'"

"That little vagabond, Garrick," said he, "bit you, when he took you in his arms;" and here our colloquy closed.

Our painful interview ended by my kind but rigid parent saying, that, since I was determined on this sinful step, he would furnish me with the means of accomplishing my journey; though even this was an act that warred with his conscience. A day or two after this, and after an affecting interview with my very truly beloved mother, who slipped a gift into my hand bedewed by her tears, I embarked on board the "Chester heavy," in my way to Parkgate, whence I had been advised to sail for Dublin; a passage, I believe, now nearly abandoned.

I had now the world before me where to choose. There was something of uneasy foreboding in the contemplation of my future prospects. I could not with indifference turn my back on the home of my youth; and yet I bitterly felt what it might have been, and what it ought to have been to me. How different the sensations with which my brother must have left the same home! when every anticipation of his young and ardent mind was joyous;—his college and studies, his youthful and agreeable companions, inhabitants of a world I was forbidden to explore. He could at once renounce the sanctified mechanics, and retain his parents' approbation!

I indulged in one reverie after another during rather a melancholy journey. Before this I had never been from home twenty miles,* and was not fitted by nature or education to encounter the difficulties and hardships of even a stage-coach journey. I was shy of my travelling companions, for I knew nothing of what was called the world; and therefore did not then, as I have done since, to my great profit, extract aught of fun or frolic from my expedition.

It was a dark and dreary morning when I landed at the Pigeon House; and, in spite of myself, a melancholy foreboding

* Excepting in his visit to Canterbury.

stole over me. I had embarked on a dangerous sea of adventure, without rudder, compass, or pilot; and all seemed comfortless. "Where am I? who knows me? In a strange country, without a friend, without a recommendation, and almost without money;" for my pride had struggled with, and mastered my prudence. It was fortunate that I had not been scrupulous with my dear mother, or I might have rued it; for the mite given me by the good man my father was nearly expended before I was well settled in my first Irish lodging.

I landed on the 28th of May, 1794; and a thinner and more consumptive specimen of an Englishman never set foot on the Emerald Isle. As soon as Aurora condescended to develop her plans for the day, I was cheered. The goddess shone forth in all her spring splendour;—the exceeding and novel drollery of all the lower orders, with whom I had my first dealings after I left the Custom-house, came upon me with such irresistible force, that I could not negative a proposal, however absurd, for laughing. The powerful contrast that manifests itself on first landing in France is not greater than that experienced by a close observer when he encounters the crowd of whimsical beings who surround and pummel him after his luggage is cleared from the Custom-house in Dublin.

Here the Autobiography, in a connected state, unfortunately terminates; but some detached fragments, intended to have formed a part of it, will be introduced in their proper places.

CHAPTER V.

Early letters to his friend Mr. John Litchfield—Departure from home—Journey to Ireland—Dublin—Introduction to Daly the Manager—Mrs. Wells (afterwards Mrs. Sumbel)—Owenson—Miss Campion (afterwards Mrs. Pope)—Miss Farren—Holman—Honourable Mrs. Twisleton—Dishonourable conduct of Daly—In danger of being drowned—An Irish Humane Society.

At this period of Mr. Mathews's career, I introduce the following letter (the prelude to many others), written on the eve of his departure from his paternal roof. It will show that his affectionate feelings, and love of home, were only interrupted, not destroyed, by the ruling passion; and that his family, however objectionable his bias and pursuits seemed to their preconceived notions, had become resigned, if not reconciled, to the course of life he had determined to pursue.

His last amiable consideration for those whom he nevertheless felt irresistibly compelled to quit, proves the tenderness inherent in his nature, and that in leaving, though voluntarily, for the first time, his excellent parents and the roof under which he was born, he was not therefore divested of that portion of suffering which a good mind and feeling heart ever undergo at a necessity of inflicting pain on those whose love and good intentions are indisputable, even when the manner of evincing them is inimical to the happiness they would promote.

The ensuing letters are the compositions of a youth, much younger than his years, from the circumstances of his bringing-up, and his too long confinement to

"Home, where small experience grows."

His health from childhood had been weak; his growth so rapid as to give serious apprehensions that his life would terminate early. He was, besides this, his mother's darling; and he might be said, in familiar phrase, to have been "tied to her apron-string" much longer than male children are expected to be petted. This mode of treatment, while it kept his mind from the contamination of evil, narrowed the sphere of his ideas.

He was scarcely emancipated from home prejudices and fire-side habits (for his term at a public school was not of long duration), and the custom, which his fond mother insisted on, of his passing every allowed period of absence from school duties under her own eye, precluded that wholesome and necessary experience which a community of boys inevitably gives, in little, of the grown-up world before them.

The modesty of his self-opinion; the generosity with which he judges the conduct and merits of those about him; his manly though meek endurance not only of the trials he had incurred by his resignation of his home prospects, but even of the injustice which he was not prepared to expect; his integrity and good temper; his proud independence and honourable notions—all combine to constitute these letters a most interesting feature in the opening of his eventful history. They assuredly display the native goodness of his disposition, while they must mirthfully amuse every person versed in theatricals and acquainted with the genius which, by dint of the most laborious struggles, and most untiring perseverance, raised its possessor to the height of the profession he so ornamented. What but smiles can attend upon those relations which present him in characters not only of the most insignificant nature, but in style so preposterous, under the present recollections of the performer! *

To Mr. John Litchfield, Jun.

Strand, 28th May, 1794.

Dear Litchfield,—As I leave town at six o'clock to-morrow morning, I must pass this evening at home. My father and mother have a very particular desire that you should sup with them; and this being the last evening we can spend together for some time, I hope you will favour us with your company.

As for the play, you can see the new piece any other evening; and "Alexander" is not to be endured. We can drink our parting glass as comfortably in our room, nay, I hope more so, than at Williams's.† I must pass this evening with you; therefore do not tear me from home.

Your mother was so good as to ask me to tea before I went; I shall therefore come down this afternoon. Be good enough to look at my books, and send them by George, as I wish to pack them up.

* I take this opportunity of thanking Mr. Litchfield for the loan of these letters. But for his kindness, the whole of the period of Mr. Mathews's life, to which they relate, must have been a total blank, excepting a few anecdotes left upon my memory, from my husband's occasional repetition of them.

† A tavern in Bow-street, which was, I am informed, much frequented by the stage-stricken.

I have sent you Boaden's play; and also "Travellers in Switzerland." This latter is the only new play I have.

Yours sincerely, CHARLES MATHEWS.

To Mr. John Litchfield, Jun.

Chester, May 31st, 1794.

DEAR LITCHFIELD,—I arrived in this city last night at nine o'clock, at a very large and commodious inn. Mr. Hitchcock was obliged to leave on Wednesday, but left me a letter of direction to find him in Ireland. I met with an Irish gentleman, of the army, in the coach, who was going to Dublin; and he has recommended me to a captain of a packet, whom we met here. We sail to-morrow morning at eight o'clock, and leave Chester at two this afternoon for Parkgate. I breakfasted yesterday at Litchfield, where I had the pleasure to find that Garrick and Johnson were well remembered. One of the inhabitants showed me where Johnson was born; and there are some of the Garricks now in the town. It is their market-day here; and the situation from the inn is very similar to that in the market at Canterbury, with the same kind of entrance to the cathedral. I have been very fortunate here at breakfast. I unexpectedly met with a couple of muffins; and a fine leg of pork is now being dressed for dinner! I cannot hear from you till I get to Dublin, from whence I will write as soon as I arrive. Remember me most affectionately to all your family, and to all others who think me worth inquiring after; and believe me to be

Yours unalterably, CHARLES MATHEWS.

(Saturday, One o'clock.)

To Mr. John Litchfield, Jun.

Dublin, June 4th, 1794.

DEAR LITCHFIELD,—I left Parkgate on Sunday last at two o'clock, and arrived in Dublin last night at eleven, which is reckoned a remarkably tedious passage, as they frequently cross in fourteen hours. I was extremely well during the voyage, a very uncommon circumstance on board. I slept at an hotel, and found Mr. Hitchcock this morning, who walked about Dublin with me for two hours, to look for a lodging; all of which I found most extravagantly dear. I have got one chamber, with a closet to dress in, for 6*s.* 6*d.* a-week, which in English money is only 6*s.* It is by far the handsomest lodging I met with, and, here, is reckoned *wonderfully cheap!* I met with several inferior, at 8*s.* and upwards, to 15*s.*; single rooms, with ragged beds. You recollect, on our last meeting, recommending me to one at 3*s.*; conceive, then, after walking two hours, to be surprised at meeting with one so *cheap* as 6*s.*

I was this morning introduced to Daly, who behaved very politely to me. He is as tall and corpulent as Williams in Bow-street. I am to

rehearse *Jemmy Jumps* to-morrow morning; and I expect to play next Monday, but am not quite certain what character. The play this evening is "He would be a Soldier," and the farce of "All the World's a Stage," by command of the Lord-Lieutenant. At present they have no professed low comedian. Meadows, a singer (who performs *Caleb* to-night), is the only actor of any consequence in this line. I had some conversation with Mrs. Wells this morning in the green-room. I talked of *The World* newspaper to her. She speaks very highly of Fuller and J. Hewerdine, but not so of Swan. When I told her he was in the militia, she laughed most extravagantly. I shall write as soon as possible again to you to tell you something of this very superb city. Direct to me, at Mrs. Moland's, No. 14, Exchequer-street, Dublin; and believe me to be

Yours ever most affectionately, CHARLES MATHEWS.

To Mr. John Litchfield, Jun.

Dublin, June 14th, 1794.

DEAR LITCHFIELD,—I admire Dublin exceedingly. You will no doubt be surprised to hear that I am going to leave it. Daly has behaved extremely ill to me; for he has put me off from day to day with promises of playing, and he has as often disappointed me. I promised Mrs. Wells to play for her benefit. It will be next Thursday. I am to play *Lingo*, and, I believe, *Jacob*. I was recommended by one of the company to apply to Owenson, who is making up a company to go to Kilkenny, one of the most important towns in Ireland. Owenson* has played all the Irish characters in Daly's company for many years past. I was introduced to him, and spoke *Sir A. Absolute, Jacob*, and *Lenitive*. He was very well satisfied; and said, if I was going on the stage in that line, I might depend on a first situation in his company. All the players here speak well of him, and would be glad to go with him, and leave Daly. Those who have no articles have not hesitated, some to join Moss, and others Owenson. Daly is hated by all the performers, scarcely any of whom can get any money from him. Owenson opens his theatre on Monday, 23rd. I expect to leave Dublin on Friday next. Daly met me, and said, he had heard I was going with Owenson; and asked me if I would like to play "walking gentlemen." I told him, by no means. It was his intention to keep me in Dublin until I had spent all my money, and then have offered me a small salary, and made me play "walking gentlemen," a proposal which I must have accepted rather than starve. Cherry, the comedian, is coming from York, and Wathen from London; of course there would have been no situation for me in that line. The company here is very small and very bad; Palmer, Clinch, Moss, and several others having left it. Hargrave is a good actor, and his voice very pleasant. He is the only man in tragedy that is decent now. Mrs.

* Owenson was the father of Lady Morgan.

Kennedy is the principal lady in comedy, and a Miss Champion* in tragedy. Mrs. Hitchcock is a tolerably good actress in Mrs. Bland's line. Her husband is much respected in the company; but they all look upon him as a tool of Daly. I have seen Daly play the *Copper Captain* extremely well; that and *Walter* are the only characters I have yet seen him in. There are a vast number of places taken already for Miss Farren's first, second, third, and fourth nights, but very few for Holman and Mrs. Twisleton. As soon as you receive this, look at the Irish paper, and at *The World*, and you will perhaps see me advertised for Mrs. Wells's night.

I am, yours ever most affectionately, CHARLES MATHEWS.

To Mr. William Mathews.

Dublin, June 14th, 1794.

DEAR WILLIAM,—I have been in this city nearly a fortnight, and of course have had time enough to find out its beauties and deformities, both of which are numberless. I cannot sufficiently admire the buildings. There is a university here—the only one in Ireland. There are several hundred students, who dress in the same manner as those of Cambridge and Oxford. It is a very superb building, and boasts some very fine gardens, which are public. There are scarcely any public amusements; only one playhouse, and a place they call the Rotunda, for concerts. The politicians, I think, are more numerous, and by far more violent, than those in London.

Daly has treated me very meanly, having continually put me off with promises of playing. Mrs. Wells's benefit is next Thursday, when I expect to play *Jacob Gawky* and *Lingo*. I mean to leave Daly, and go with a new company to Kilkenny. All give him a most dreadful character, and I shall be glad to escape from him.

Let me know whether you went to the masquerade on the 5th instant. The account of it in *The Courier* mentioned a master of arts as a good mask. Was it you? I am delighted with the walks about Dublin. Adieu.

Yours most affectionately, CHARLES MATHEWS.

To Mr. John Litchfield, Jun.

Dublin, June 23rd, 1794.

DEAR LITCHFIELD,—I received yours last Thursday with a great deal of pleasure.

On Thursday evening I made my first appearance, for Mrs. Wells's benefit, in *Jacob* and *Lingo*. The house was tolerably well filled, and I was received in a manner that exceeded my greatest expectations. The scene in *Jacob*, where he mimics the minuet, was highly applauded; but *Lingo* gained me much more. I had an excellent dress, and my

* Afterwards the second wife of Pope the actor.

wig did a vast deal for me. The songs were very much approved of, judging from the applause. The two last were encored: "Amo, amas" was one, and "Of all the pretty flowers," the other. Each time I came to the part of "To be sure I did!" I gained bursts of applause. When I had sung it I made my exit, but it was loudly called for again. I was somewhat fatigued, and told the performers to go on for the next scene. *Laura* and *Eugene* went on, and were hissed off. I was, of course, obliged to sing it, and gave very general satisfaction. The musicians declared that the song was never so well sung in the theatre before. I received numerous compliments, and was told that the part had not been so well performed since O'Reilly played it. I was distinctly heard in every part of the house, which is larger than the Haymarket Theatre.* Daly sent for me on Friday, and declared himself very well content with my performance, and offered a guinea per week. I was obliged to accept of it, as Owenson has been disappointed of his theatre in Kilkenny, and cannot open it before August. Cherry is coming here from York, and Wathen from Richmond. Though I was so well received, I cannot expect to get all the capital low comedy parts at first. Hitchcock behaves very well to me, and will ensure me every farthing of my money. I am to play second and third parts in tragedy and genteel comedy, and occasionally parts in low comedy. I

* The criticism in the Dublin paper upon this performance fully corroborates the foregoing account.

"Theatre Royal, Dublin, June the 19th, 1794.

"Mrs. Wells's benefit was on Monday, the 19th of June, when 'The Chapter of Accidents' and the 'Agreeable Surprise' were performed to a very elegant audience.† Independently of her unrivalled imitations, there was the attraction of a new performer, of the name of Mathews, in the characters of *Jacob* and *Lingo*. The introduction of a young actor in two such different characters on the same night was rather singular, and the task to the performer indisputably very arduous. He went through them both, however, in a very creditable style, and received the most flattering marks of approbation. He assumed the Somersetshire dialect very happily, and discovered in the course of the performance very extraordinary talents in low comedy. The scene where *Gawky* mimics the minuet was highly relished by the audience. Flattering as was his reception in *Jacob*, his performance of *Lingo* was certainly superior, and met, if possible, with still louder applause. The songs of 'Amo, amas,' and 'Of all the pretty flowers,' were sung with infinite humour, and were universally encored. The turn of 'To be sure I did!' was neatly managed, and gained him repeated applause. The two above-mentioned songs were never so well given in this theatre, and the part, on the whole, has not been so successfully played since O'Reilly.‡ Moss was very inferior. Mr. Mathews's manner of playing is quite original, and he has tolerable freedom in action. The turn of his features is irresistibly comic, and on the whole, we may reckon him a very desirable acquisition to the Irish stage."

† Mrs. Wells, afterwards Mrs. Sumbel, was the original performer of *Cowslip*.

‡ A great comic genius, who died young.

am promised *Rundy*, in "The Farmer," when Wathen plays *Jemmy Jumps*. They never give more than 1*l.* 1*s.* to a young actor. Most of the salaries here are what they call "play-house pay;" that is, payment only each night they play; so that a man engaged at three pounds a-week, if he performs three times a week only, has only half of his salary. I am to be paid if I play only once, and am not obliged to take "a benefit." Daly deducts money for a benefit from all those who are engaged at the play-house pay. I am therefore equally well situated with those who have three pounds. Daly bears the worst of characters; but I have dependence on Hitchcock, who is much beloved, and has great influence in the theatre. As manager, he disposes of all the characters. Of course he will sometimes serve me. He treats me very well, and invites me frequently to his house. I see my name now in the bills for the first time:—"To-morrow evening, 'Lear;' *Albany*, Mr. Mathews!" It is a pretty part for its length, and each one I perform will make me more used to the stage. Hitchcock has promised to let me play *Lenitive*, if he can get up the piece. It has not been played since Moss left them. They have lost their *Label*, *Juba*, and *Caroline;* so that its revival will be attended with some difficulty. Holman, it is said, has arrived, but I have not yet seen him. He is advertised to play in "Romeo and Juliet" on Wednesday; Mrs. Twisleton* the *Juliet*. Among their plays are, "Don Sebastian" (Holman, *Dorax*, Mrs. T., *Almeyda*); "Fontainville Forest," "Venice Preserved," and "Alexander." Miss Farren† is expected every day. She will draw very crowded houses, as the boxes for her nights are extremely well taken. Holman and Mrs. T. are not expected to draw much. We have played since I have been here—"He would be a Soldier;" "Recruiting Officer;" "Rule a Wife and have a Wife" (Hargrave, *Leon*—very good acting; Daly, *Copper Captain; Estifania*, Mrs. Kennedy—both well); "Jane Shore" (*Shore*, Mrs. Wells; *Alicia*, Miss Champion,—this actress, who has been the heroine at the private theatre in Fishamble-street, played here two years back, and is a great favourite); "Grecian Daughter;" "Gamester;" "Chapter of Accidents" (*Jacob*, moi-même—of *course!* very well! hem! *Bridget*, Mrs. Wells); "Wild Oats." "The Children in the Wood" is played extremely well. The *Children* are superior to those in London. Hargrave is a very improving actor; Daly, good in genteel comedy; Mrs. Kennedy, in genteel comedy, a very good actress. Hurst, in Hull's line, admirable. Cunningham, in "fops," is a very good actor; I think he would succeed very well in London in R. Palmer's place. He is a very genteel young man, and a pleasant companion, and the only one in the company with whom I associate. Miss Brett, a very good singer, and very pretty actress in Mrs. Bland's line. Miss Farren's plays are "Know your own Mind;" "Hypocrite;" "School for Scandal;" "Belle's Stratagem;" &c.; and the farce of "The Citizen." Hargrave is the only man, except Hurst, who is decent in tragedy. They give him five pounds a-week certain; and he is very regularly paid. They are terribly at a

* The Hon. Mrs. Twisleton. † Afterwards Countess of Derby.

loss for tragedians; and every man is obliged to play in them, whether suited or not. "Fontainville Forest" is printed in Dublin—a very paltry edition. When it is performed, Hargrave is to be the *Marquess;* Hurst, *Peter;* Cunningham, *Louis,* and myself the *Phantom.* I expected to have been *Louis,* but Cunningham was cast for it before I came out. Boaden said he wished me to be the *Ghost.* Remember me to him, and tell him of my success, and the cast of his tragedy. I have dined with W. Palmer, to whom Cunningham introduced me. He is very much like his brother Bob, and was a great favourite here. He is married, and lives elegantly. He has six pounds per week; Moss, ten. I will thank you not to tell any one what salary I have got, as you know people unacquainted with the stage will expect to hear I receive much more, and if they hear this, they will perhaps judge unfavourably of my reception. My salary is to be raised in the winter. I mean to board with a family, as I cannot otherwise live on the money I receive. The wardrobe and conduct of the theatre are much better than I expected to find them. They dress their plays in general very well. The *Grecian Daughter* was dressed entirely in "shapes," all belonging to the theatre; and the dress of *Gloster* in "Jane Shore" was equally elegant with that worn by Harley* at Covent Garden. I expected to be some distance hence before I could receive another letter from you. It is, however, much better to be in Dublin than in the country parts of Ireland, where very little reputation is to be gained. I thank you for your concern about my "wiggery," which escaped the officer's "rude gripe," without discovery. They only opened the tops of my trunk and portmanteau, but proceeded no farther. Adieu! and be convinced of the unalterable affection of yours,

CHARLES MATHEWS,
of the Theatre Royal, Crow Street, Dublin.—Hem!

In the foregoing letter it is impossible to read his comment upon the merit of *Albany,* in "Lear," without a smile. "I see my name in the bills for the first time—*Albany,* Mr. Mathews! It is a pretty part, for its length." (!) Let those who have known Mr. Mathews in his high-day remember this character, and amuse themselves at the idea of his representing it.

It is noticeable that his comments upon the performers named are very judicious. Their merits, well known afterwards, proved his judgment to be correct at that time. Mr. Hargrave performed as a tragedian at Covent Garden Theatre in 1804 or 1805, previously to his retirement from the stage.

To Mr. John Litchfield, Jun.

Dublin, July 20th, 1794.

DEAR LITCHFIELD,—"Fontainville Forest" has been played three

* The tragedian.

times with very great success. I played the *Phantom*, and got great applause. I had a very fine dress, and very like that which Follet wears. The dresses in general were new, and the scenery also. Holman's dress was plain, but very handsome. Hargrave's, for the *Marquess*, extremely splendid. Holman played some parts of *La Motte* very finely; and Hargrave did great justice to the *Marquess*. The same points told each night, as in London, but particularly that where *La Motte* tells the *Marquess* he buried Adeline "in a chest." Each night it gained five or six peals of applause. Holman and Mrs. Twisleton perform only three nights more. They have had but very poor houses, in comparison with Miss Farren, who is entirely the fashion. Cherry came out in *Sir Peter Teazle* and *Lazarillo* on Wednesday last. He is a very good actor, but extremely short, much more so than Quick. Miss Farren has played eight nights, and has ten more to come. Each night has been an overflow. There is some talk of Kemble coming here. I want to hear how they go on at the Haymarket, and of the alterations at Covent Garden. I see very few English papers here, and know nothing of the London theatricals. Is the anecdote of Palmer and the Prize case true.*

I am very pleasantly situated in a house, where I board and lodge. I have a room to myself, and live extremely well for a half a guinea per week. There are two other performers, both English people, who board with me. The landlady of the house is a widow, and a very pleasant woman. I can make my cash hold out very well, but am in want of many stage properties, particularly for tragedy; buskins, russet boots, Spanish hat, cocked hat, sword, ruff, &c.

Yours ever most affectionately, CHARLES MATHEWS.

Direct to Mrs. Byrn's, No. 24, Temple Bar, Dublin.

To Mr. John Litchfield, Jun.

Dublin, August 3rd, 1794.

DEAR LITCHFIELD,—On opening your packet I found a letter from my father, a few lines from my brother, and an introduction from Boaden to Holman.

I am very much obliged to you for the satisfaction you express at my success. My sentiments were exactly similar to your own. I was very doubtful of the event, eager as I was to embrace so hazardous a

* This inquiry alludes to Mr. John Palmer, whose embarrassed circumstances caused him at this time to live in his dressing-room at Drury-Lane Theatre; and when the Haymarket re-opened for the summer season, at which he was engaged, the fear of arrest suggested the expedient of conveying him with a cart full of scenery, in one of the cabinets used in "The Prize;" and in this manner he actually was removed from one theatre to the other. Formerly a patent theatre was considered as a sort of theatrical *Alsatia* for money-owing criminals—a sanctuary from "John Doe and Richard Roe."

profession; I was however much encouraged from my attempt in that "hole"* which you mention, and thought myself extremely fortunate in having the opportunity of performing *Jacob*, of which my friends in London on that occasion were good enough to approve. The attempt fully answered my wishes. Everything was superior here. I had room on the stage, and every advantage of regularity, with the aid of performers who understood what they were about, and were able to assist me. I had also the advantage of being the only person who had played the character for two seasons. But if these were my advantages in *Jacob*, it was not so with *Lingo*, the recollection of Cornellies, who was a great favourite, and the original in *Lingo*, being fresh in the minds of the audience, and coming after Moss, who had played it within a fortnight. These were powerful reasons to make me fear success in that character. Thank heaven, however, I combated these; and, on my entrance the second time to perform it, I was saluted very flatteringly. It is the custom here, in the galleries, previously to applauding a performer on his entrance, to call for it. For instance, when *Cherry* enters, the cry is instantly, "A clap for Cherry!" and if any performer displeases them, a groan is called for. This has several times happened when I have been on the stage in an inferior character in tragedy. On such occasions they have called out "A clap for Lingo!" which is very flattering, and frequently gives me that confidence which I very much stand in need of.

I do not think myself at all ill-used by having only a guinea a-week. A young performer cannot expect a large salary; and the salaries here are by no means great. However, I thank you for concealing the sum from people whom you have told of my success. It is a general idea with those who are unacquainted with the theatre, that the salaries are much larger than they really are. I have not entered into any articles with Daly, nor do I mean to do so. I should always wish to have it in power to leave him if a superior situation offered.

I was much entertained by your account of the masquerade; and am much obliged to you for sending me the sham bill. On opening one of the packets, this bill fell out in the green-room, where I opened it. At first I was deceived, and thought fortune had been uncommonly favourable, but was very soon undeceived. However, I did not tell the people to the contrary, who all supposed I had received a bank bill. It is a good thing to be imagined rich. Daly was in the green-room at the time, which I was glad of. I really think that he does not deserve so bad a character as he in general bears. He has behaved very well to me, and takes great notice of me; I have been paid very regularly, and have not been fined a farthing.

I left England without calling on Wayte, to whom I am indebted for a few articles, among which are the dresses for the private play. I shall be very much obliged to you if you will call on him to make an apology for my neglect, and tell him I will remit the money as soon as it is in my power.

* The private theatre, in a dirty street called "Short's Gardens."

My brother tells me that Boaden mentioned me in *The Oracle*. Will you copy it for me, and send it with what he said of "Fontainville Forest," in your next packet? This will save me 1*s.* 1*d.* Everything helps on these occasions, and I must be frugal.

I very much feel the loss of my box of plays, which would be very useful to me here; but the expense of having them over would be too great, and I cannot afford it. They are already packed up at home, but I believe there are upwards of 2 cwt.

There are two people from this theatre engaged at Covent Garden—Mr. and Mrs. Davenport. He is a very respectable performer in a general line, but mostly "old men," and she is a very good actress in Mrs. Webb's line.* She is also very serviceable to a theatre in second-rate "genteel comedy" and tragedy. She played *Madame La Motte* very well.—Believe me to be yours ever most affectionately,

CHARLES MATHEWS.

24, Temple-row.

During the engagement of Miss Farren (afterwards Countess of Derby) Mr. Mathews was obliged to play the part of *Beaufort* in "The Citizen." Now, of all "walking gentlemen," as such are technically called, *Beaufort* is the most dreaded by young men; being an insipid, sighing dangler, the character is generally given to the most insignificant actor in the company, if he be young enough to be "sent on" for a lover. Imagine, then, a novice in this part, one whose intention to be a "low comedian" was thwarted by the wily manager, whose agent had in fact kidnapped him over, as cunningly as gipsies delude children from their homes with sweet and fair promises, only to break them as soon as they have their dupes in their power. Daly was so well known by experienced people in the profession, that he was fain to entice the young and unsuspicious, and therefore sent one of his agents to England occasionally in order to entrap those whom he might meet there, for a cast of characters he found it difficult to get filled. Mr. Hitchcock discovered a young man who wished to play *Lingo;* this, then, was the bait with which he covered the hook, and with such *taking* promises he flattered and led him on with hopes never intended to be realized, tickling him like a trout, till he fell a willing victim into the hands of his tempter. It is true, as he has related, that he *did* play his stipulated part of *Lingo*, but it was immediately followed up by *Lamp*, *Albany*, the *Noble County Paris*, and such like dawdling worthies, and *Beaufort*—the dreaded *Beaufort*.

* Mrs. Davenport, since the inimitable "Old Woman" of Covent Garden Theatre, having succeeded Mrs. Webb in that line soon after this period.

Imagine, then, a tall, thin, awkward youth, with a deportment utterly unfit for a stage-gentleman of that starched day, with a craving appetite for *Old Philpot*, which he in after years performed so admirably, compelled to submit to be the butt, not only of *Maria*, but of all the audience, in *Beaufort*. Miss Farren, accustomed as she must have been to the worst sort of acting in the part, probably never before saw a total novice represent it; and it was with dismay that she observed him appear in the green-room dressed in a scarlet coat (the only one provided by the theatre for the occasion) which had obviously been made for a man a head shorter than himself, and whose arms were in proportion with his stature, for the sleeves reached only within an inch of the wrists of the present unfortunate wearer; a yellow embroidered waistcoat, a pair of black satins scarcely covering the knee, and showing more of a leg guiltless of calf than grace or fashion demanded; his hair liberally powdered and tied in a *queue*, according to the mode; a *chapeau bras* which he scarcely knew how to dispose of, and which now and then in his embarrassment he was tempted to put upon his head. Fancy Mr. Mathews in such a dress, and at the age of seventeen, playing a puling, sentimental drawl of a lover to a woman of elegant, easy figure and accomplished manners! When he came before the audience there was a general shout, as if a clown in a pantomime had made his appearance, succeeded by an almost simultaneous shriek from the gallery, and then the following delicate *inuendoes*:—"Oh! see the mop-stick!"—"Ah! Pat, hould yer breath hard, or y'll puff him off the stage!"—"Oh! and it's the only puff I'll give him, any how!"—"Oh! the crethur! what a slice of a man! Arrah! where's your other half? Why didn't ye bring it with ye, jewel?" These and such like pleasantries greeted his first appearance. When *Maria* came on the stage to him, he being directed by the author to look thoughtful and embarrassed, Miss Farren *felt obliged* (by the same authority) to imitate the performer's peculiar action, and then laugh in derision of it. Hereupon followed, from *on high*, a dreadful noise, that might be supposed to resemble the war-whoop of American Indians, in token of their approval of the imitation.

At length, when the love-sick *Beaufort* made his exit, he was followed by a universal Whoo!!! After this had subsided, one of his tormentors got up and proposed "*a groan for the long lobster*," which was loudly and heartily accorded with due honours, as far as the gallery was concerned, to the infinite amusement of the rest of the audience.

When the piece was over, Miss Farren went up to the young actor behind the scenes, and apologized to him for having been an unwilling accessory to the ridicule his unpractised manner and appearance created, owing to the necessity she was under of obeying the author's intention, and following up her own character in the farce. She kindly expressed her concern at seeing a young gentleman thrust into a part so obviously out of his line, and which in itself was so contemptible as always more or less to draw ridicule upon the actor. She added, that his inexperience, and the disgraceful dress the theatre had provided for him, had of course rendered the result still more distressing.

These delicate alleviations soothed, but did not heal his feelings; he begged, almost in tears, that Mr. Daly would on a future occasion give the character to a fitter representative. But managers, as well as fathers, have "flinty hearts," and, moreover, Daly could find no one else to take such a part, unless he paid a long arrear of salary. *Beaufort* was not worth so high a price, and therefore the part was assigned to a good-for-nothing actor, as he was deemed who had last been ridiculed in the character, and whom it was not the manager's intention to pay much longer. The best apology that could in the first instance be adduced for such an unprincipled determination was, that Mr. Daly, in kidnapping a young man of respectable family and friends, stage-struck as he was, believed that he possessed resources independent of the paltry salary agreed upon, and therefore might afford to go on without pay after his first probation, and from his own confessed dramatic ardour, not feel the injustice, or at least not be inclined to question it. This at first he might believe, but he was afterwards quite aware of the privations and difficulties his dishonourable treatment occasioned the poor novice.

I have heard Mr. Mathews say, that he has gone to the theatre at night without having tasted anything since a meagre breakfast, determined to refuse to go on the stage unless some portion of his arrears was first paid. When, however, he entered the green-room, his spirits were so cheered by the attention of his brethren, and the *éclat* he met with among them whenever he put forth his powers of amusement, added to the gaiety of the scene altogether, that his fainting resolution was restored, all his discontent utterly banished for the time, and he was again reconciled to starvation—nay, he even felt afraid of offending the unfeeling manager, and returned home silent upon the subject of his claims. Then came in succession the London performers, Miss

Farren, Kemble, Incledon, &c., some of whom he beheld for the first time. Fancy a young enthusiast witnessing and becoming familiar with such talent in the profession he doted upon. He devoured their every look, he drank up every tone, he was enrapt with their excellence, and gloried in the choice he had made. In short, he was content to live on in the hope, remote as it seemed, of being one day received by an audience with the same enthusiasm with which they were received. Such a hope was worth all present suffering, and suffer he did manfully.

Throughout his correspondence he made no positive admission, after the first disappointment, of ill-usage from Daly—not even to his most confidential friend did he complain of any subsequent injustice. Not a hint of actual pecuniary distress was given to Mr. Litchfield or any of his own family, nor of his consequent privations. When he alludes to stoppages of salary from occasional closing of the theatre, he touches so lightly upon the consequences to himself, that his friend would hardly have been justified in proffering assistance, which, after all, his pride, and a determined constancy in suffering, would have rejected as uncalled-for and unnecessary.

Among some detached and undated memoranda for his Life, I have found the following account, in my husband's handwriting, of an accident that befel him about this period, which I well remember his relating at various times.

"During Miss Farren's performance in Ireland, 'The Wonder' was one of the plays announced. From one of those irregularities which were common, the performer of *Lissardo* was not forthcoming, and I received commands from my superior officer to get ready in the part, having only the few hours from rehearsal time until evening to study it in. I therefore sallied forth to walk and learn, preferring the open air and exercise to in-door fagging. I crossed Limerick Bridge, and was strolling by the banks of the Shannon, intent upon my book, when I met a brother actor—as it turned out for me, most fortunately met him—occupied like myself, in conning over his lesson. I asked him to read some of the dialogue to me, that I might ascertain how much I had got by heart. We then separated, mutually agreeing to assist each other in this way in another half-hour or so. In the mean time, the weather being sultry, I thought I would bathe. I accordingly stripped for the purpose, and having frequently paddled about near the same spot with impunity, I believed there was no

part of the river where I could get out of my depth, for be it known that I had nothing but an 'alacrity in sinking' to qualify me, as I never had a notion of swimming. With some confidence in the solidity of the bottom, I walked and splashed until I imagined I had reached the deepest part, when I was instantaneously overwhelmed with the horrors of drowning! I felt the sensation of slipping down a precipice! Cataracts, thunder, lightning, seemed suddenly to environ me! The agonizing sensation of finding myself irrecoverably shut out in an instant from all human aid! a thousand racking thoughts of my distant home! my parents' distress! succeeded each other with the most frightful rapidity during the brief space of time that I was impotently struggling for recovery. But oh! the ruling passion, strong in death—dare I confess it? My mind was occupied for a brief second by conjecture who could act *Lissardo* that night if I were drowned! Then the worse than agony of renewed hope, when for a brief second I beheld the fair face of day, the sunny, cloudless sky, after my immersion below, for I rose twice, sufficiently above the surface to see distinctly my friend Seymour seated in the meadow, intent upon his book. I made an impotent attempt at a shout to him. I hoped I had articulated, but it must have been a faint scream. Alas! he saw me not. Again I sank! and can comprehend the 'catching at a straw,' for my sensations, which are now vividly before me, were those of perishing in an unfinished building, where the beams of the floor were above my head. I struggled to grasp them, with a wild and frantic action, with my hands above my head! Drowning has been variously described, and is generally supposed to be a very easy death. I have not experienced any other manner of dying certainly, but I cannot conceive any mode more painful. The tremendous noise of the rushing waters in the ears, the frightful flashing of light, as if surrounded by sparks from fireworks, the sense of suffocation, and oh! who can describe the sensations I briefly felt upon my second bound from the bed of the river to the surface! Again I attempted a feeble cry! Again I saw my studious companion, and again I had the conviction that I was unseen! Every hope now fled, and I gradually lost all sensation except that of struggling to reach the beams that floated in my imagination. To the last, I was under the impression that by desperate efforts I might grasp this apparent substance, and so save myself. This is all I am capable of relating from my own knowledge, for I was near death, most decidedly, before I was providentially rescued.

"It appeared from the evidence of my friend, that the 'beam in my eye' was my latest vision, for he had jumped into the river with his clothes on, to save me. He was an expert swimmer, and made for the spot where he had last seen me rise, when in almost despair of rescuing, or even finding me, he felt his legs suddenly seized with violence, and he was dragged by my dying struggles, feeble as they were, to the bottom. He was a most accomplished swimmer and diver, or I should never have related the tale. He contrived to get me on shore! I have no recollection of anything that occurred from my third sinking until I saw a heterogeneous collection of human figures and humorous countenances about me; and was almost suffocated afresh with the aroma of 'mountain dew.' I was carried, much in the state in which I am to believe I came into the world, by two soldiers, under the command of my preserver Seymour, to the first public-house that presented itself; and there they rubbed me down, and rubbed me in all directions; and I was recovered by the means prescribed by the humane society — of whisky dealers. Curiosity brought numbers to see what was on table; and the jokes that were passed upon the occasion were something like the following:—

"'Let's luk at the face of him. Rub away, ye devils! I've seen the eyes of him opening. Don't trust the potteen near the mouth of the cratur, or he'll leave you none for the rubbin'. Pour a drop down to rouse the heart of him. Niver fear!—keep the sowl inside the body of him, and he's safe! How did he get in the sea itself?'—'Sea! sure, it's the Shannon. There's no sea there, you tief o' the world. Did he jump in?'—'Sure, he went a swimming, and had never learnt?'—'He had one lesson only, I heard, and that was to teach him how to sink.'—'By my sowl, then, he was an apt scholar. What name's upon him? Has he a woman itself that owns him? Sure, I heard the Englisher red-coat say, he was one of Daly's *divarters*.'

"The most zealous attendants of the Humane Society, however, might have here taken a lesson in adroitness in restoring animation. Suffice it to say, their means were effectual, and I acted *Lissardo* with the accomplished Farren that night."

CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Mathews and Miss Strong—His engagement to her, and his father's letter to him on the subject—His marriage with Miss Strong—Increasing ambition—Application to Tate Wilkinson, the York Patentee—Mr. Mathews's visit to his family in London—His reception—Mr. Mathews's engagement with Tate Wilkinson—His first interview—His *début*—His apparent failure and discouragement.

The next three years of Mr. Mathews' life presented nothing worthy of special notice. His attention to his professional duties was unremitting, and he gradually advanced in the favour of the public and of those London "stars" who visited the Dublin and Swansea theatres, at the latter of which the young actor procured a more profitable engagement in the year 1795.

In the summer of 1797 Mr. Mathews met, at the house of a mutual friend, a young lady about his own age, of very prepossessing manners and of superior mind. It was said that the "gods had made her poetical," and that she was otherwise a person of elegant attainments. These young people became very intimate; and, though friendship in such cases is not believed in by people of experience, I have been assured by both of the parties in question, that their acquaintance began and continued upon that basis alone, for some time. One day, however, the young man, in a *tête-à-tête* with the interesting orphan (for such she was), in a pensive mood, was drawn into a hearing of her history. She was the daughter of a physician, Dr. Strong, of Exeter, who, by a concurrence of wayward events, became embarrassed, and died almost penniless, leaving his only child upon the compassion of friends. She, however, was too proud to lead a life of dependence, and settled herself in a school, instructing a limited number of young ladies from the stores acquired by her education, laid up by her parents as resources for her own happiness in the position in society she was originally intended to take. With this best dowry that a child can boast of, she was enabled to obtain some of the comforts which it was at first hoped she might enjoy, without applying her mental gains for

their purchase; and at this period she was labouring in her vocation, and highly esteemed by all who knew her. The story of her helpless youth and her honourable struggles, which allowed her a bare support, made an impression upon the somewhat romantic youth. He was not in any degree heart-touched; but pity is confessedly akin to love, if not nearly related. He had merely called upon Miss Strong for an hour's lounge on a day of non-rehearsal, without more intention or expectation than civility and kindness created; but, after an hour's stay, he left her presence as her affianced husband! As he walked towards his lodging, he asked himself what could have induced the offer he had made to this amiable girl? — and he found no answer in his heart. He was neither "in love," nor "pleased with ruin;" and yet he had plunged into the one without any of the sweet inducements of the other! Well, what was done could not be undone. He had listened to her woes, and admired her character; and, in the enthusiasm of youth and the moment, he had offered to protect the young creature against further toil and care. He had settled to marry a person without sixpence, and undertaken to provide for her upon the splendid expectancy of—twelve shillings per week! and this without what is called being in love!

That his intended wife was at that period deeply attached to him, every moment of her after-life indisputably evinced; and it is no mean praise of her husband, under the circumstances of their union, that he not only never divulged the delicate secret of his having inconsiderately and inadvertently made her the offer of his hand, but throughout her married life he treated her with every kindness and attention. Nor do I believe that, except to his second wife (whom he really loved), he ever committed the truth of his dispassionate feelings towards his devoted Eliza.

It will be seen, by the following sensible letter from his excellent father, that the bridegroom elect had written for that permission, which he felt to be a necessary form and preliminary to a determined act.

To Mr. Charles Mathews.

London, Sept. 11th, 1797.

Dear Charles,—I received yours of the 5th instant, which brought strange news unto my ears. You introduce a subject in your letter which rather surprised me, although you seem to think it would give me pleasure.

It will always give me pleasure to hear that you are doing well; but

I cannot think that even success in your present pursuit is doing well; as I am convinced it will eventually turn out for evil, independently of the disgrace that attaches to your character while you continue in so disgraceful an employ. You say that, with my concurrence and approbation, you are going to be married; and so you would, I suppose, whether I approved of it or not. You say that the lady has been introduced to me in a distant way—distant, indeed! I suppose with an express design to give me some intimation of her mental qualification, and to prove that her mind as well as her name was *Strong*, you have presented me with the figurability of her mind, and left me to guess at that of her body, which I suppose to be but small of stature by your own description of her, when you say, "But the dear little girl," &c. But I am satisfied though she be little, if that little be but good.

You have given me no account of her age, situation, or manner of life, or by what means she has hitherto subsisted. How can I form a just decision in my mind, so as to give you advice, or grant my concurrence in an affair of such great importance as a cast for the life of one of the parties, without any premises to decide on? Has Miss Strong any probability, either by fortune or talents, of maintaining you? If she has not, what must be her conception of your being able to maintain her? Is your present income able to do it? or, have you any better prospects in life, to enable you to support her with honour and decency in future? I hate all Smithfield bargains in matrimonial contracts, and always esteem love-matches as the best when entered into with "real discretion;" but "wisdom ought to dwell with prudence." If Miss Strong has no better prospect than to live and starve with you upon your present income, it plainly proves to me that her passion for your person, or the endowments of your mind, is very far stronger than the strength of her mind, and has overpowered her understanding in the present instance; and your love to her person, and particularly to her mental endowments, has shot beyond the mark, and will rather degenerate into a cruelty towards her, if you are not capable at present, or in prospect, of making provision for her future comfort.

The essential ingredient in the marriage state to render the parties happy is mutual affection; where that is wanting, all is discord; but that, abstractedly considered, will not feed the body, clothe the back, or provide for the exigencies of an increasing family. Therefore, look before you leap, lest you leap into ruin, and involve the object of your delight in ruin with you, which I should be sorry to be the case with dear Miss Strong, whom I esteem, although a stranger to her, because you seem to esteem her upon valuable grounds.

I do not know enough of Miss Strong to put my negative to your union with her, whether it would be decisive or not; or to give my consent, from any conviction that she possesses known virtues and talents to qualify her to make you a good, industrious, or an economical wife. Therefore both myself and your mother are at a loss to know

how to act consistently with our duty and love to you, in regard to a question of such importance, and to give our decision upon a case which we have only a prejudiced witness to testify of the party who is the beloved object of his wishes. I must own frankly, that had Miss Strong been one of your company, I should have shuddered at the idea of your union with such a person; but, as to all that appears concerning Miss Strong, your mother agrees with me that, upon mature deliberation between you, as your love is reciprocal, if you care for each other's welfare, enter into this union, so as not to involve yourselves in disgrace, and us in trouble; you, being of age to judge for yourselves, have our consent; and God grant you his blessing, and much real happiness! But, let me remind you both, that, while I wish God's blessing on you in the rich provision of his hand, and social happiness with each other, you cannot be really or eventually happy without you are found walking in his fear, and devoted to his service; and this, I think, my dear Charles, you are far from doing in your present situation. Your mother, sister, brother, and Mrs. Maitland, whom I saw yesterday, with all your other friends, &c., join in best wishes to you and Miss Strong.

I am, dear Charles, yours affectionately, JAMES MATHEWS.

P.S.—Pray write to me soon about all particulars. William wrote to you last week.

In eight days after the date of the foregoing letter, the extract from the parish register now before me declares, that "Charles Mathews and Eliza Kirkham Strong were married by 'bans' on the 19th day of September, in the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-seven, in the presence of John Wynne and Evan Francis, at Swansea;" and it may be hoped that the young husband found the society of his bride so sufficient, as to supersede for several months any communion of soul with distant friends; for, till the time that his ambition stirred him to remove to "new climes," all correspondence appears to have ceased with his friend Mr. Litchfield.

Human desires are ever onward,

"Man never *is*, but always *to be* blessed."

Mr. Mathews, it is true, was possessed of all the fame that a Welch circuit had to bestow upon a favourite comedian, and all that esteem in private which attends upon an honest man in every part of the world. But he had married, and his dowerless wife was a daily though "sweet remembrancer" that some addition to his income was urgently necessary to make up the sum of content and comfort. His salary did not exceed twelve shillings per week!—but then he had benefits, great ones too, for the Lilliputian scheme he was engaged in; but all, alas!

incompetent to that worldly ease which his active exertions and irreproachable habits seemed to deserve.

He had heard that *a* Mr. Emery, the principal comedian of the York company for some years past, was on the point of departure to London, and he immediately applied for his situation in a letter to Tate Wilkinson, which promptly produced the following characteristic reply from that eccentric veteran.

Hull, January 3rd, 1798.

Sir,—Mr. Emery does not leave me until the end of October. Now you are an entire stranger to me, therefore it would be madness to engage a young man, with a double-loaded company (as I really at present have), of whose abilities I am entirely ignorant. On the other hand, it would be madness for you next summer to come to Leeds on trial, at so heavy an expense. If you were near me, it would be practicable. What I want as Sneak, Oatland, Tom, &c., must be of great promise. Do you sing? for that is a great help in Hodge, &c.

I am, sir, yours, &c. Tate Wilkinson.

Mr. Mathews, Theatre, Carmarthen.

After Mr. Mathews had determined to take his leave of his Welsh friends (and but that "honour pricked him on," it would have been, nay, was a very painful effort), he was naturally desirous, between the parting from one dramatic sovereign and swearing allegiance to another, to employ the interval in a visit to his family; to whom also he was anxious to present his amiable and clever wife. The young couple, therefore, reached the paternal home—once so gloomy to Mr. Mathews—with feelings on his part which left no room for any other remembrance than the real affection he retained for his relations; while his father and mother, with as much good taste as goodness of heart, received their disobedient son in the true spirit of Christian forgiveness. It might have been supposed by the total oblivion of the past, which seemed to have been tacitly determined on, that he had been invited home by one of those advertisements in which disconsolate parents promise, on the return of the fugitive, that no questions shall be asked; or, like one I once read in a country paper, which held out to a runaway spoiled boy the inducement, from his fond mother, that "if Richard would come back again, he should be allowed to sweeten his own tea, and not be put upon by his younger sister any longer."

Welcomed to London once more by his affectionate family, he had also the happiness of enjoying the society of his youthful friends—his earliest and dearest, Mr. John Litchfield, his first

playmate in public, as well as in private. This gentleman's judgment he considered almost infallible; and he gave up to him his whole budget of mimic acquirements, which drew forth praise, and augury of future excellence, from the evidences given of present improvement. This opinion was a support to him in subsequent difficulties and drawbacks in his profession, and pointed out to him the road to future fame. Mr. Litchfield had also, like himself, married a young lady of great talents and engaging manners.*

With these friends the enthusiastic young couple visited all the theatres; and their pious parents "asked no questions." His father saw that his son was unvitiated by the walk he had chosen. He found him respected by all his former friends; and those of his new line, who called at the house, were evidently gentlemen, though actors; and, finding in his son every good quality unimpaired (except that of bookselling), he smiled with approbation upon him, perfectly satisfied "that nothing ill could dwell in such a temple." His wife, too, was a favourite with them, for they soon discovered a religious bent in her; and moreover rejoiced that, however poor, she had not been selected from that dreaded profession in which their son had enrolled himself; a man might escape its contamination—a woman could not; so they had been told, and so they believed.

During this visit the dear kind people carefully excluded their more serious visitors, and no family could be happier. Mr. Mathews would even listen to "Charles's" songs and mimicry with complacency, nay, even with enjoyment; and Mrs. Mathews would give loose to a merriment she had before no idea she was capable of feeling. In short, when the time for separation arrived, it was as painful, though less bitter, to all parties, as it had been when, on the former occasion, the youth had resisted a father's will, and "rushed upon his fate."

The following letter (a little out of place here) had fixed his engagement with Tate Wilkinson; and, at the appointed time, the young couple took their departure for Yorkshire.

May 20th, 1798.

Sir,—Don't let either of us place too great a reliance. I will engage you at 1*l.* per week, until the first Saturday in June, 1799. But, to promise an increase of salary, and a certain line of business, where I

* Mrs. Litchfield will be remembered as celebrated both in tragedy and comedy. She was some years a favourite and first-rate actress at Covent Garden, until her premature retirement from the profession she so ornamented, and which has since much missed her.

have much at stake, would not be prudent on my part to give. Therefore, as to an additional salary, or a cast of parts—unseen, unknown—I cannot think of giving any such promise, as I must cast the parts as I judge. A Mr. Penson is going as well as Mr. Emery, and Mr. Penson possesses a very extensive comedy cast; so I must, with such an opening, try for the best. You may have great talents—moderate, or indifferent—all which must be judged by the manager and the public. Therefore, all the favour I have to ask is, whether you determine on being at York August the 18th. Don't neglect your interest; but don't let me rely on your coming, and then not make your appearance: may be disagreeable not only at the time, but as to other engagements. Mr. Penson leaves me in August.

I am, Sir, wishing you every success, yours, &c.

TATE WILKINSON.

If you possess near the merit you lead me to expect, you must not fear a good engagement here, there, or anywhere. You are sure I wish you to please. No managers part with favourite performers, but he must wish the new ones to succeed.

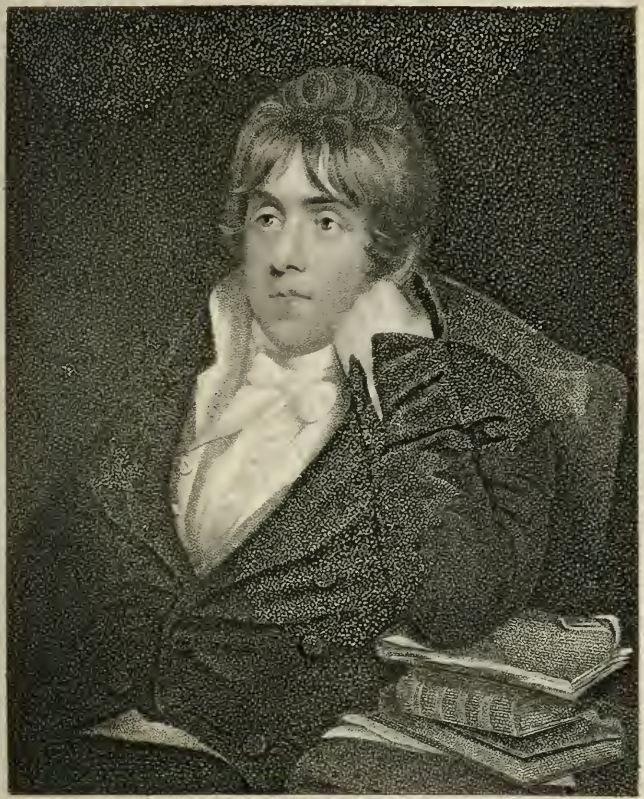
MR. MATHEWS, Jun.
MR. MATHEWS, Bookseller,
No. 18, Strand,
London.

With new ardour, animated and strengthened by his present hopes, and reliances justified in some measure by the success of the last two years, this nevertheless undisciplined recruit entered somewhat rashly the front rank of the greatest dramatic general of England's provinces—the pupil of Foote—the personal friend of Garrick—and himself once a celebrated London actor. To be allowed admission was something; but to be pronounced, when there, able and worthy to maintain a prominent position in Tate Wilkinson's company was, all knew, a rapid step to advancement and promotion to the very summit of an actor's ambition; a London engagement making always the bright perspective in the view of a York favourite. That theatre was, in fact, considered a nursery and preparatory school for metropolitan performers at this period; and was, as it gave frequent proof, the very best (Bath excepted) that could be desired for the development of incipient genius, and the maturity of rising talent.*

* The York and Bath theatres claim the thanks of the play-loving public for having prepared and supplied some of the best performers that ever trod the London boards. In justification of this assertion I need only mention, with reference to York, out of many, the names of Siddons, Jordan, Kemble, Cooke, Emery, and Fawcett, to show that it has "done the state some service."

Early in August the young and sanguine comedian reached Pontefract, where the York company were "located" for a time, carrying with him all his worldly possessions—namely, a small trunk containing his scanty wardrobe, about eight or ten comical wigs of various pretensions—a wife, and a stock of yet unsubdued animal spirits, promising better support to the young couple than the vast salary of twenty shillings per week—the extent of his expectations, even with the most brilliant success. But his partner loved him, and saw only the cheerful side of the question; and feeling how much he deserved, she could not doubt that his merits would be justly appreciated. Mrs. Mathews, however, had a mental reserve when she expressed her conviction that they would "do very well" upon her husband's income. She was a candidate for literary gains, and relied upon her power to make many additions to their comforts by the sweet labour of her pen; but she was timid, and would not whisper her plans until they were ripe for execution; so that her speculations were confined to her own bosom, and her husband was kept in ignorance of the mine of wealth in store for him when he least expected it.

In the mean time it was necessary, as his first duty, to present himself to his future master: accordingly, having spruced himself up in his other suit, he proceeded with a palpitating heart to the manager's house. After sending up his name, he was desired by the servant to walk up stairs, and in the shortest time possible found himself alone upon the first landing-place, with a choice of two doors. At a venture he tapped gently at the first, and he was immediately satisfied that it was the right one, for a drear yet authoritative voice bawled out, "Come in!" This command was reiterated with an increased force before the palpitating heart of the person for whom it was meant would permit him to turn the lock. He thought of his interview with Macklin the terrible, and almost trembled as he entered. He had in some measure been prepared for something extraordinary in Tate's manner, by his own letters, and had endeavoured to make himself familiar with his character, by a careful perusal of "The Wandering Patentee," as this eccentric person styled himself in that entertaining work. The awe, however, felt by the aspirant at the ideal of his first meeting with this celebrated man, and henceforth master of his fate, was in some measure relieved, if not removed, by his first glimpse of the figure before him, and its undignified occupation; neither of which realized any of Mr. Mathews's anticipations of the dignity



of the old-school gentleman, or his preconceived notions of his consequence and superiority, and something approaching to self-possession was restored to him.

"Come in!" The young man obeyed. Tate was shuffling about the room with a small ivory-handled brush in one hand, and a silver buckle in the other, in pretended industry, whistling during his employment after the fashion of a groom while currying and rubbing down a horse.* It was a minute at least before Tate took the least notice of the new-comer, who in the short interval had opportunity to observe the ludicrous effect of Tate's appearance, which was indeed irresistibly droll. He was still in his morning's dishabille, which did not consist of the usual undress of men of his standing, who generally indulged in a copious *robe de chambre*, easy slippers, and the Dilworth cap, to relieve the formality and confinement of a wig. Tate's early dress did not differ from the later one in which he appeared after the busy part of his day was finished. But "he wore his rue with a difference," that is, at this period, his coat collar was thrown back upon his shoulders, and his Brown George (a wig, so called in compliment, I believe, to King George the Third, who set the fashion) on one side, exposing the ear on the other, and cocked up behind so as to leave the bare nape of his neck open to observation. His hat was put on *side* foremost, and as forward and awry as his wig. Both were perked on his head very insecurely, as it seemed to the observer. He presented altogether what might be called an uncomfortable appearance, and which to those who were in the habit of seeing him at other times, might be supposed to be contrived as a striking contrast to his precise and smug effect after he had made his toilette, when he was particularly neat.

When the young actor entered, he caught the back view of this strange figure, which made no movement either of courtesy or curiosity. Mr. Mathews, after an unsuccessful cough, and a few significant hems, which seemed to solicit welcome and attention, ventured at last upon an audible "Good morning, sir." This had its effect, and the following colloquy ensued. "Good morning, sir," said Mr. Mathews.—"Oh! good morning, *Mr. Meadows*," replied Tate, very doggedly.—"My name is *Mathews*,

* It appeared that it was his custom daily to polish his own buckles, for as these particular buckles (small silver shoe-buckles) were especial favourites, from having been the gift of his friend the immortal Garrick, and were worn constantly in his dress shoes, he was chary of allowing others the privilege of touching them; in fact, he never trusted them out of his own hands.

sir."—"Ay, I know," wheeling suddenly round, and looking at him for the first time with scrutinizing earnestness from head to foot. Winking his eyes and lifting his brows rapidly up and down, a habit with him when not pleased, he uttered a long-drawn "U—gh!" and exclaimed, "What a Maypole!—Sir, you're too tall for low comedy."—"I'm sorry, sir," said the poor disconcerted youth. But Tate did not seem to hear him, for, dropping his eyes and resuming the brushing of his buckles, he continued, as if in soliloquy: "But I don't know why a tall man shouldn't be a very comical fellow." Then again turning sharply for a reinvestigation of the slender figure before him, he added, with gathering discontent, "You're too thin, sir, for anything but the Apothecary in 'Romeo and Juliet;' and you would want stuffing for that."—"I am very sorry, sir," rejoined the mortified actor, who was immediately interrupted by the growing distaste and manifest ill humour of the disappointed manager.

"What's the use of being sorry? You speak too quick." The accused anxiously assured him that he would endeavour to mend that habit. "What," said Tate, snappishly, "by speaking quicker, I suppose." Then, looking at Mr. Mathews, he, as if again in soliloquy, added, "I never saw anybody so thin to be alive!! Why, sir, one hiss would blow you off the stage." This remark sounding more like good humour than anything he had uttered, the comedian ventured, with a faint smile, to observe that he hoped he should not get that one—when Tate, with affected or real anger, replied, "You'll get a great many, sir. Why, sir, I've been hissed—the great Mr. Garrick has been hissed; it's not very modest in you to expect to escape, Mr. Mountain."—"*Mathews*, sir," interposed the miscalled.—"Well, Matthew *Mountain*."—"No, sir——"—"Have you a quick study, Mr. Maddox?" asked Tate, interrupting him once more. Mathews gave up the ineffectual attempt to preserve his proper name, and replied at once to the last question, "I hope so, sir."—"Why" (in a voice of thunder), "arn't you sure?"—"Ye-e-es, sir," asserted his terrified and harassed victim. Tate shuffled up and down the room, whistling and brushing rapidly, looking from time to time with evident dissatisfaction, if not disgust, at the object of his scrutiny; and, after several of these furtive glances, he suddenly desisted from his occupation, and once more stopped abruptly before him.

It must be understood that, in Tate's first surprise, he had neglected to offer his visitor a seat; therefore Mr. Mathews had

remained standing near the door, relieving his weariness, after a long journey, by alternately shifting his position, like a pupil taking his first lesson from a dancing-master; and leaning sometimes upon one foot and then upon the other, in awkward embarrassment. Tate, as I have observed, stopped and inquired if he was a single man? Of course he replied in the negative. "I'm sorry for it, *Mr. Montague;* a wife's a dead weight without a salary, and I don't choose my actors to run in debt."—"I hope you will have no cause to complain of me in that respect, sir." Tate was again busy with his buckle; an obstinate tarnish, "a damned spot," called for his most vehement exertion; yet he spared a look or two at his visitor's face. At last he seemed to have collected all his moral force, and, after another pause, he demanded, "Pray, when did you have that paralytic stroke, Mr. Maddox?"—"I—I never had one at all, sir," said the now completely mortified youth, with difficulty restraining the tears which were making their way to his eyes; when Tate, giving him another earnest look, and as if unconsciously drawing his own mouth awry in imitation of the one which had suggested the last question, answered dryly and significantly, in Mr. Mathew's tone of voice, as he turned away, "Oh! I thought you had!"

All this was inauspicious; and, after the interview had lasted a few minutes longer, Tate strongly recommending the young man's return to his father, and an "honest trade," as he said, all that could be gained by Mr. Mathews was the manager's slow leave to let him enter upon his probation, and at least have a trial before final condemnation. Thus dispirited, he returned to his anxious wife, with the saddest impressions and anticipations. However, after a few days, his morning observations of the play-bills were cheered by the sight of his own name—really his name. Mr. Mathews, from the Theatre Royal, Dublin (for Tate would not own a "man from the mountains"), was announced to appear in the character of *Silky* in "The Road to Ruin," and *Lingo* in "The Agreeable Surprise."

Mr. Mathews's first appearance was unattended with any of that "pomp and circumstance" usually so inspiriting to the debutant. Nothing before or behind the curtain marked him as being an object of importance; besides, the town was one of no consequence, and could neither make nor mar the reputation of an actor—not even critical. Tate called it the Montpellier of Yorkshire, and I believe the air of the place, and other local prejudices unconnected with his managerial interest, induced his annual remove to Pomfret with his company; so that no

sensation was created for or against the new performer. If any feeling was produced by his appearance, it was probably to his disadvantage, their established favourite, Emery, having satisfied them that no other actor could exceed, few equal him; and probably the recollection of their brightest star rendered that of the night dim in comparison. His self-possession, too, shaken as it was by Tate's evident mean opinion of his talents, and predisposition, as it seemed, to crush his efforts, possibly and naturally affected his exertions, and made them flat. In short, he retired from the scene of his first public trial without any definite impression of whether he had succeeded or not. Tate shunned him, the actors silently pitied him, but none praised him; and in a few nights after he was to be seen performing *Kenrick*, an old sentimental Irishman, in "The Heir at Law," and an interesting bespangled page in a serious ballet—the gentle *Theodore*, in "Raymond and Agnes!"

There can be but little doubt that Mr. Mathews's first appearance under the auspices of Tate Wilkinson was a grievous disappointment both to the manager and the youthful aspirant. The characters assigned to him grew more and more insignificant, and his downfall culminated in the engagement of a Mr. Hatton, a man of little genius but of thorough acquaintance with the usages of the stage, who, after Mr. Emery's departure for London, was sent for to fill those parts to which Mr. Mathews had aspired.

Wearied out at length by these accumulated causes, he addressed a letter of remonstrance to "the manager" (as Tate was called, *par excellence*), who was at the time "ill at ease," and would "admit no visitors." This produced the following reply, which may be deemed a fair specimen of the critic's temper towards the person addressed, remaining at the same time as a warning instance of prejudiced opinion and perverted judgment. It must be considered a rarity of its kind, and was preserved by Mr. Mathews ever after with the most guarded care.

To Mr. Mathews.

I am dangerously ill, therefore unable to attend to theatrical grievances. After a 2^{d} and a 3^{d} time seeing y^{r} performance, I aver'd, and do aver, that Misfortune has placed an insurmountable bar as to the possibility of y^{r} ever being capable of sustaining the first line of comic business. Mr. Emery I requested to inform you of the same at Wakefield, who was entirely of my opinion. For the paralytic stroke,*

* It appears that the writer's impression on his first interview with Mr. Mathews, that the irregularity of his features was occasioned by a paralytic

so far from a comic effect, renders y^r^ performance seriously disagreeable. I told Mr. Hill* that not all the Mirrors in the kingdom, in print or in glass, ever can establish you for a first comedian. If God wills it, it will be so, but no other order or interest can effect such a miracle. If you were to hear how you are spoken of (ask Mr. Jarman†), you would not rely too much on y^r^ unbounded applause at Hull. If you had ask'd at Wakefield if you were to play the characters you mention, Mr. Jarman would readily have told you, No. If you think the company is in general approv'd, you are mistaken; am sorry to be told, quite the contrary. Y^r^ *Randy* is very bad indeed; so is *Motley*. *Rundy* they have been used to see really well acted. As to *Jabal* for Mr. Hatton, it was his first request which I granted, as Mr. Jarman can testify. Do you think I engaged Mr. Hatton to hurt you? On my honour, no. If you say, why add to my expense? I answ^r^, necessity, and full conviction stared me in the face. Try by degrees to be useful, and by such means get into respect. Y^r^ worth as a man (as far as I know) I much esteem; but as a first-rate actor, you must try some more discerning leader, and officer some other troop. I think "Feeble Old Men" is a cast you are most likely to be useful in. The pain I have suffered at my breast in scratching these lines is more piercing than what you feel at the loss of *Frank*. You have youth, sobriety, and assiduity, which sometimes does wonders. Wish Emery had been more open with you. I recommended the shop, as suited to you and Mrs. M.; but he said you were so stage-bitten it would only vex you. I can only say, Stay and be happy, or Go and be happy; and ever be happy; and wishing myself better, am y^rs^ in great pain,

TATE WILKINSON.

Notwithstanding this letter, poor Mr. Mathews remained submissive to his fate, which he may truly be said to have thus ultimately conquered; for before the close of that year he saw the departure of his rivals, and found himself in possession of all the parts so long withheld from him. He was ever ready to come forward and undertake anything necessary to the manager's interest; his study was miraculous, and he could always be depended upon; his principle, in all he did, to be just to his employer and fair to his brethren, gradually made his way. By degrees he acquired confidence from trust, and his powers became more and more apparent; so that, in the autumn of this year, on my arrival in Hull, I found him the principal comedian of the company, and a prodigious favourite with his audience and the manager. I had not, to be sure, much judgment, or the

attack, had not been removed, although Mr. Mathews at the time denied that he had ever been visited by such a misfortune.

* Mr. Hill was the proprietor of "The Monthly Mirror," the magazine mentioned by Mr. Mathews as having praised his acting.

† Mr. Jarman was the prompter of the theatre.

least experience in dramatic excellence, but I can remember thinking him "a very funny young man," though, as Tate said, the "thinnest" I had ever seen "to be alive." I suspect his *Sentinel* in the play of "Pizarro" made little impression upon me, for I do not now remember seeing him at all till he appeared in the farce of "The Rival Soldiers," as *Nipperkin;* and in that his performance convulsed me with laughter from beginning to the end.*

From this time Mr. Mathews kept undisputed possession of his advantage. His comic singing was most particularly admired, though confined in those days merely to songs of epigrammatic point or humorous detail; all mainly dependent for their effect upon the quaintness and oddity of his style in singing them: as a local writer once observed, in reference to his early struggles, "Mr. Mathews became a living instance of what may be effected by perseverance. It rendered him one of the most popular actors that ever appeared in the Yorkshire theatres."

Mr. Mathews, it may be imagined, became another creature from the time he found himself raised from the depressing position of a third-rate actor to that of the first; and had any increase to his income accompanied his success, he would have had no alloy to his satisfaction.

Poor Mrs. Mathews's projects of gain by her publications had all terminated in disappointment. She, like her husband, had been a triton among the minnows, and flattered into vanity by the partiality of her friends, who thought her poetry agreeable, and not being disposed to be critical upon a young lady's verses, written, as it appeared, for private circulation, had said more in commendation than they might have done had she then meditated the publication of her efforts. It was not to be expected that two people, even with habits of the most provident kind, could possibly exist upon eighteen shillings per week; and the non-success of Mr. Mathews having precluded any profits from his benefit of any consequence, it was not extraordinary that some debts had been contracted, especially as he had firmly abstained from applying to his family for aid. But still he worked on, and still Mrs. Mathews wrote—neither of them to any increase of their pecuniary means.

* Those who have seen him perform at the Adelphi, the first year he became part proprietor of that theatre, the Tinker (*Caleb Pipkin*), in Mr. Buckstone's drama of "The May Queen," may form some notion of him in the part of *Nipperkin*, both characters requiring the same sort of humour.

CHAPTER VII.

Leeds—Prejudice entertained there against actors—Rudeness to female performers—Outrage upon Mr. Holman, and upon Miss Gough—Feeling towards actors in Hull—Anecdote—Denman and the landlady—Unpopularity of the Income-tax—Mr. Mathews's whimsical remonstrance to the Commissioners—Letter to Mr. Litchfield—Tate Wilkinson's opinion of Murphy's "Life of Garrick"—Mr. Mathews's success at York—His fondness for attending trials—Action for killing a donkey—Witness interrogated by Counsellors Raine and Cockle—Simplicity of the witness—Letter of Mr. William Mathews to his brother.

Leeds was at this period considered little better than the Botany Bay of actors. Their dread of the season was in proportion to the inconveniences and disagreeables they experienced during its course. The extraordinary—nay, frightful prejudice cherished by the people I have spoken of in that day, made this periodical stay amongst them a matter of serious dread, especially to the females of the theatre. It appeared as if even the lives of the performers were held in no consideration amongst a certain portion of the natives, whose estimation of "lakers" seemed to agree with ours in relation to the most insignificant animals created only for our use. These people carried their opinions still farther, for they deemed it no sin to torture, or even destroy (could they have done so with impunity) any one of the profession. If an actress had occasion to cross a certain brig (bridge) at a period of the day when the croppers were "sunning themselves" in each other's eyes (in other words, taking their lounge between their working hours), she was obliged to provide herself with an escort to protect her from the rough jokes and assaults of even the most gallant, whose kindness was as much dreaded as their brutalities.

Mr. Holman once came to Leeds to act, and not liking the dressing-room assigned him in the theatre, performed his theatrical toilette at home. On the first night of his appearance, he was proceeding in a sedan-chair, dressed for *Lord Townley* in "The Provoked Husband," in the customary court-suit, &c., and otherwise ready to appear upon the stage. In order to escape notice,

the scanty curtains of the chair were drawn, it being still daylight. Unluckily "'t brig" was lined on either side with its dusky visitants. The sedan, unluckily also, happened to be a novelty to these barbarians, and was hailed as an event—an object of excitement and curiosity. "Eh, dom't! what's cooming o'er t' brig? A leather box wi' two chaps a carrying o' t'! What divil o' thing! Well, I niver seed sooch in all moy loife!" Then stopping the chairmen, who were proceeding gravely along, and crowding round the chair, they uttered many suggestions as to its nature and use, while Mr. Holman, in some trepidation, endeavoured to draw the little curtains still closer about him. The foremost of the croppers, however, insisted upon the chairmen setting "the thing" down for his particular inspection, and then peering through a small line of uncovered glass into the interior, he caught an obscure view of poor *Lord Townley*, who deeming it now best to speak and awe them into forbearance, undrew the curtain, and by this act almost sealed his fate. The comedy in which he was going to take part became in great danger of being exchanged for a tragedy, for no sooner did the men obtain a full view of his lordship in his embroidered coat, powdered head, and rouged face, than with a cry of horror (natural enough) they shouted, "A mon wi' his face painted!" "It's a laker!" was the simultaneous cry; and an order from the crowd to "toss him o'er t' brig" was the consequence of this discovery.

Whether such a suggestion would have been carried into execution or not is uncertain, but the timely interference of several gentlemen of weight and authority luckily put the matter beyond the control of Mr. Holman's assailants. The sedan was ordered on, accompanied by his deliverers (who were going to see him perform), to the very great relief of the actor, who, as he was carried out of the mob, heard one of the ruffians exclaim to another, "Well, I'm vexed we didn't topple him into t' water. Where 'd been t' harm i' drowning a laker?"

I remember hearing another instance which occurred about a year previously to the foregoing. A Miss Gough, wishing during the period of her sister's performance at the theatre, to enjoy an evening's stroll by the canal-side, found herself suddenly caught up in the arms of an enormous man-monster of a stone-blue colour from head to feet, dress and complexion. She struggled for freedom, which he declared he "wad na gi' her till she told him wha she was wi' sooch few claithes on" (the fashion at that period being to wear very scanty petticoats, and of thin tex-

ture). Too glad to give him the first part of the information required, in hopes of release, she told him that she belonged to the theatre. "Ah! a laker!" cried the brute, setting her down upon her feet, but holding her securely. "Here! here! here's a laker!" he bawled out triumphantly, as it seemed, to some of his companions who were employed dressing cloth at a distance. "Coom hither, aw tell thee, here's a domned laker! aw 've getten a laker!" Away they came, leaving their occupation, and running with as much eagerness as might be supposed to have been excited by an announcement of a unicorn or any rare monster. Men, women, and children came thronging round the unfortunate girl, and after having commented upon her dress and profession with coarse jests and insulting words, they soaked in the canal a quantity of brown paper (which they appeared to use in their occupation), and wrapped it round her slight form, till she looked like a mummy. They then turned her forth towards the town, driving and chasing her before them with yells of delight, until she came in view of some human beings, who compassionated and relieved her from her pursuers and her damp habilaments.

But it was not only with such as these that an actor's profession was despised, but even amongst the majority of the inhabitants. With them, actors, showmen, or any other exhibitors, were synonymous, since they had but one word in common for all; and Garrick, and Richardson of "Bartlemy Fair," the hero of Wilkinson's company, and the trumpeter for Punch, would be all included and confounded in the term "laker."

Wakefield, as far as related to the lower orders, was in the same state of refinement. Mr. Mathews was walking there by the river-side one day, with a pet puppy at his heels, when one cropper said to another, "Aw say, kick that dug; topple him into t' river; he's nought but a laker's dug, thou knowst."

At Pontefract and Doncaster such things were out of the question; and at the latter place, to be a "laker" was to ensure a welcome with all the kind and agreeable inhabitants of that town; whilst Hull was the genuine seat of hospitality. Even there, however, might be found amongst the middle orders people who at the best looked upon an actor as an object of commiseration. In the winter of 1799, Mr. Mathews dined, in company with one of the performers (Mr. Denman), at a respectable tradesman's house, where two neighbours joined the party after dinner. When the glass had enlivened the party, and every one became chatty and sociable, the two friends who had

"dropped in" (and who were evidently not theatrical), were desirous to know who the new visitors were. On receiving from their host the intimation in a whisper, one of them expressed his astonishment aloud, and both indeed seemed incredulous. Mr. Mathews's thin, spare form was a striking contrast to the John-Bull look of Denman, who was ruddy and plump. "Nay, nay, I cannot stand that," exclaimed one of the worthies, when mine host reiterated his assurance that "the gentlemen were of Mr. Wilkinson's company."—"Why not?" asked Mr. Mathews, with some pique in his tone and manner. "Why," replied the puzzled Yorkshireman, "I 's sure you're both such nice-looking men, and so well-dressed, that I can't believe you can be players. You," continued he, looking at Mr. Mathews, "do look a little bit hungered, but your friend there, I warrant, gets a good meal's meat every day of his life." Denman, much amused, dryly observed, "You're quite right, sir, I certainly do; but my poor friend there seldom gets a dinner above once in a fortnight!"

Amongst other reminiscences of my husband's Yorkshire engagement, I remember, when the income-tax occasioned such commotion and heart-burning amongst people of small means, the actors belonging to the York theatre felt the hardship of its lessening the little they received, which, at the utmost, was barely sufficient to maintain them. Mr. Mathews, just then rising into notice, and his humour getting pretty well understood in private as well as in public, took it into his head to resist this claim upon his little pittance, with all the power of his droll fancy; and he hit upon an expedient as original as it was eccentric, in order to evade the tax. To induce a mitigation of its enforcement, he drew out a long and tedious list of all the professional drawbacks upon his limited receipts, and in a lengthened string of absurd items, enumerated with ingenious minuteness his "stock in trade;" something in the following manner, but extended beyond my limits to give entire. A specimen will suffice.

At "the head and front" of his inventory, we will suppose "wigs," which were described in all their infinite variety: such as, "Black wigs, white wigs, brown wigs, red wigs; bush wigs, tye wigs, bob wigs, bishops' wigs; wigs with a tail, wigs without a tail; lawyers' wigs, judges' wigs, parsons' wigs, powdered wigs; old men's wigs, young men's wigs," &c.

"Natural heads of hair: namely, red hair, grey hair, flaxen hair, brown hair, black hair, Quakers' hair, countrymen's hair, and bald heads of every description. Beards, whiskers, mustachios, eyebrows," &c.

Stockings of every colour were then enumerated. "White, black, brown, yellow, grey, blue, green; white stockings with red clocks, red stockings with white clocks, white stockings with blue clocks, blue stockings with white clocks; silk stockings, worsted ditto; black stockings with scarlet clocks, scarlet stockings with black clocks, yellow stockings with green clocks, red stockings with no clocks, &c.

"Old men's shoes, young men's shoes, velvet shoes, leather shoes, gouty shoes, dancing shoes, hobnail shoes, square-toed shoes, round-toed shoes," &c. After which, boots of every quality and shape were described. Then shoe and knee-buckles of every size and fashion: "diamond buckles, paste buckles, gold buckles, silver buckles, stock buckles, belt buckles, hat buckles," &c., &c. After these regular requisites were given, came the miscellaneous part of his stock, such as "hats, feathers, caps, cravats, stocks, ruffles, frills, neckerchiefs, handkerchiefs, pens, books, ink, paper, music paper, red ochre, rouge, carmine, hair-powder, wax candles, Indian ink, camel's hair pencils, hare's feet, whiting, burnt corks, cold cream, Windsor soap, and huckaback towels."

The above abridgment of this almost interminable list, which covered many sheets of paper, will give some idea of the whole, which was drawn out with the most scrupulous exactness. The author of this piece of absurdity was told that the commissioners listened to the account of the comedian's expenses, which was read aloud to them, and which they thought would last until the "crack of doom," with matter-of-fact attention and gravity for a few minutes. This was succeeded by peals of laughter and perfect good humour to the close; and though it is to be feared that this laughable appeal did not exempt his theatrical brethren from the tax, it is quite certain that Mr. Mathews was never called upon in York, from that time forth, to contribute to it.

To Mr. John Litchfield.

York, March 7th, 1801.

Dear Jack,—Murphy's "Life of Garrick" has done our worthy old manager such mischief that he cannot eat, drink, or sleep. He was in eager expectation of this publication, and hoped to derive much amusement from it; but his disappointment has been such, that he attributes an illness under which he now labours to that cause. Certainly it is not what might have been expected from so clever a man as Murphy. It was natural to look for some anecdotes of Garrick hitherto unpublished, from a man who was on the stage himself in his time. This circumstance he never mentions. In fact, there is nothing to be met

with but that which we have already seen in Davies, Wilkinson, &c.; and the prologues may be had for a shilling, in the "Spouters' Companion." We are much obliged to him, certainly, for his account of the plot, characters, &c., in "Venice Preserved," "Orphan," &c.

However, to my business. Mr. Wilkinson has detected some gross errors, particularly that of the King not having seen Garrick for many years after he came to London; and that Garrick solicited to play before him. He has the play-bills of those times by him, and has proved him to be wrong. He is anxious to publish his discovery of Murphy's mistake, and requests to know if you can oblige him with about six pages in your next *Mirror;* or, should it be more, to be continued. He says he wants neither fame nor profit, but he could not resist correcting such gross mistakes as Murphy has made, and he likes the truth to be spoken. Now, supposing a theatrical controversy to be rather valuable to a periodical publication, I flattered him with hopes of your acceding to his request. Do not fail to let him know by return of post, and, if it be possible, pray grant it to him; for his perturbed spirit will not rest till his sentiments are known. He has interlarded all his conversation these eight or nine days past with this subject: Question—"What play, sir, have you fixed for Monday?" Answer—"Why, Mr. Richer dances, and the farce is——, and as to his saying that the King did not see Garrick, it is all nonsense; because my Memoirs will tell," &c. Question—"Good day, sir; any news? How is the King?" "Why, they say that——. For my part, I have no patience, because now the 'Chinese Festival' was played when the King bespoke," &c. Question—"What will you have for dinner, my dear?" Answer—"Dinner! Oh, that mutton yesterday, was——, and then you know, Murphy not giving any account of his own playing, and giving us all the prologues that we know by heart," &c. Ha! ha! ha! Oh, Jack, I wish you could hear him!

Yours unalterably, CHARLES MATHEWS.

Mrs. Simpson's, Stonegate.

York, 22nd March, 1801.

DEAR JACK,—I have waited several days in expectation of Mr. "Williamskin's"* remarks on Murphy's life, but he at last has declared that he cannot finish them till Passion Week, so of course they cannot be inserted in the *Mirror* till the number for April. I am very sorry, my dear Jack, that I shall not be able to see you, as I proposed, in Passion Week. I am so engaged in the business, that I was fearful of getting excused from a night or two's plays, without which it would have been but little pleasure to me, as I should have had so short a time to stay; but I found from the arrangements that I could not be spared. I then had some idea of accepting an invitation from Ben Thompson, to whom I was introduced, and with whom I spent some pleasant hours in Hull. I had made up my mind to spend a part of

* The name Mr. Wilkinson called himself occasionally.

the week at Nottingham, but even of that I am disappointed, for the manager has his benefit on Easter Tuesday, and gets up "Deaf and Dumb," and "Il Bonducani;" and having *Dominique* and the *Cadi* to study, with rehearsals, &c., it will be impossible. You may judge of my disappointment.

I am getting on in York very fast, and am told by the inhabitants that I am a great favourite, which I did not think was the case last year, my benefit being only 25*l*. To be sure, that is no absolute proof, though Mr. Richer had 96*l*.; and one of his houses, his last night, in the assize week, amounted, at advanced prices, to 143*l*.; so much for heels! However, they promise me better things this year; but Hull is our best town, for a favourite in Hull connot have a bad house. But they are so cursedly fashionable in York, that we have either concerts, routs, and parties, or assemblies, every night in the week. However, I have had "Counsellor's opinion" of my acting this week, and *Serjeant Cockle* awarded great praise to it. I had the pleasure of making him laugh heartily in *Caleb Quotem*. I have delayed saying anything about the novel, and am now writing to you in a hurry; if you have, therefore, leisure to make any alterations, or improvements, in the following title, I will be obliged—"What has been."

I find it so lame, and I am so unused to anything of that sort, that I will thank you to write something in its stead. Adieu.

Yours unalterably, CHARLES MATHEWS.

Mr. Mathews was always exceedingly fond of hearing trials, and during the assize weeks at York was a frequent attendant in the courts of justice, whence he derived much of that vast stock of observation of life and character of which he so successfully availed himself in after years.

He felt great enjoyment from the frequently ludicrous trials at which he was present in the civil courts, where originals abounded, and where the passions, in all their varieties and shades, are displayed, and characteristic traits are unfolded to the observer, by the "cunning of the scene." My husband felt that much was to be gathered from the contemplation of human nature under the conflicting and self-deluding position of plaintiff and defendant. He often related cases of deep interest, but more commonly those of a ridiculous nature.

The mention of Serjeant Cockle recals the recollection of a trivial but amusing fact, which he related to me on the day it occurred, and which had convulsed the court with laughter. It was an instance of *naïveté* in a witness whom he saw examined at York. An action was brought against the owner of a waggon, which by the reckless driving of the waggoner had forced a poor donkey against a wall, and there pressed the poor creature to death. Compensation was therefore sought by its proprietor

for the loss of the animal and its services. This trial caused much mirth in its progress. The principal witness for the plaintiff was the driver of the donkey, who, feeling himself very much "brow-beat" by the defendant's counsel, Mr. Raine, became exceedingly nervous and confused in his evidence, which he gave with his eyes upon the ground. He was several times reprimanded by the judge for not looking in the faces of those by whom he was interrogated, and desired to hold up his head. The poor timid fellow's embarrassment increased upon every reproof, and the opposing counsel, Mr. Raine (who had a powerful cast in his eyes), was particularly severe with him, repeating the judge's injunction several times, saying, "Hold up your head, witness; look up; why don't you look up, I say? Can't you hold up your head, fellow? Can't you look as I do?" "Nay, sir," replied the countryman, with perfect simplicity, "I can't—you squint."

The laughter of the court now gave the supporting counsel, Serjeant Cockle (who was also a sharp questioner, but, luckily for the poor witness, on his side), opportunity of calling upon the man to describe the local situations of the several parties concerned, their relative positions at the time of the accident and death of the poor donkey, where the waggon was, and where the animal, &c. The poor harassed witness paused for a minute, standing with his eyes again downcast, as if he saw no possibility, by words, of giving the required explanation. Objects palpable seemed necessary to describe the scene referred to. However, looking stealthily round at the parties present, as he scratched his head, the image of perplexity, while Serjeant Cockle mildly urged him to obey orders, he at length seemed to have arranged the means in his mind's eye of giving the required information. Hesitatingly he began—"Weel, my Lord Joodge, I'll tell ye how it happened, as well asI can. First of all," turning to Cockle, "you'll suppose you are the wall."—"Very good," said Cockle. "Ay, you are the wall," repeated the witness, and the counsel, rather impatient at the repetition, replied, "Yes, yes; now proceed. I am the wall. Well?"—"Yees, sir," reiterated the man, "you are the wall." Then changing his own position in the court to another spot, he added, "And now, I am the waggon."—"Very well," observed the judge, in token of his understanding him, "proceed."—"Yees," again asserted the tedious, but earnest witness, "I am the waggon."—"Well, well," said the now impatient judge, "you've told us that

before. Go on; you're the waggon."—"Yees, I'm the waggon—and," with a low bow, "your lordship's the ass."

This evidence, though not perhaps quite satisfactory to the judge, was conclusive.

To Mr. Charles Mathews.

Barbadoes, June 5th, 1801.

My dear Charles,—There is a melancholy pleasure in communicating our thoughts to the objects of our best regards, when at an immense distance from us, which is not to be conceived by those who pass their lives in the dull uniformity of a settled existence, and without even an occasional separation from those they love. When I could hear every day of your proceedings, I acknowledge that you had some reason to complain of my indolence, though never of my love to you and yours. The case is now altered, and the desire of hearing from you, and communicating with you, becomes a passion of great force in my breast. Your happiness is a great object with me, and it is with much impatience I am waiting to have a communication of good news from you or your wife. Do not, I entreat you, suffer any notion of my former negligence to prevent your writing to me by every opportunity. There are two pair of hands in your family fully capable of contributing to the pleasure of an absent friend and brother; and you will be really inexcusable, if one or other of you do not frequently let me know how you pass your time, and give me full information of the amelioration of your prospects in life, and your progress towards the higher situations in the liberal profession in which you are engaged. I have been in this island two months, and have met with the greatest hospitality and friendship. A better prospect, however, offering itself for the acquisition of money in Tobago, I am about to quit this place for the latter, and as there are only two lawyers in the island, I make no doubt, with the recommendations I shall have, of soon acquiring a considerable share of business.

Hitherto ill-fortune has pursued me in every shape, but I hope that her persecution is nearly over; and I trust that hereafter I shall be enabled to spend a tranquil life in the society of my friends in England in ease and affluence. Whatever may be my fate, I shall still have the consolation of having exerted myself, and of having acquired in every situation the esteem of men of sense and worth. There has never occurred in the course of my life any circumstance so flattering to me as the estimation in which I have the honour to be held by some of the first people in point of consequence and liberality of sentiment in this island, to whom I had not even the slight introduction of a letter. Success, therefore, in my object will be the highest gratification of my self-love, as I shall in that case with propriety call myself the fabricator of my own fortunes.

You also, my dear brother, will have a similar gratification. You have uniformly gained the esteem of strangers; and by a continuance

of the same good conduct you may be certain of a final termination of all your wants, and satisfaction of every wish of your heart. I hope Eliza continues to employ her pen, and, still more, that she takes pains to improve her style. Her invention and powers are good; and by a constant perusal of the best writers, and a sedulous attention to their errors, and the defects of her own compositions, she may hereafter expect both fame and fortune from her exertions; but without labour neither can be acquired.

I hope you both continue to enjoy good health. My own is better than ever it was in England. Heat is the element in which I live. In cold weather I have a bare, comfortless existence. Tell Eliza from me, that I sincerely wish her well in body and mind; but that to secure the latter from disease, she must carefully watch that the seeds of superstition, which some one has plentifully sown in her heart, do not bring forth the fruit it generally does, illiberality of sentiment, and that worst of all fiends, religious bigotry. The whole history of mankind is but a relation of the fatal and mischievous effects of this diabolical tyrant, who has uniformly preyed upon the enlightened few that have dared to lift up their heads against the oppressor of their afflicted brethren, and has gnawed the very vitals of social existence. There is no part of the globe that is not even now groaning beneath her baneful pressure; and, whatever form she assumes, she still arrogates to herself the claim of infallibility, and her votaries, of whatever sect they may be, damn by wholesale all the rest of the world.

A freedom from superstition is the first blessing we can enjoy. Religion in some shape seems necessary to political existence. The wise man laughs at the follies of the vulgar, and in the pure contemplation of a benevolent Author of all beings, finds that happiness which others in vain look for amid the load of trumpery and ceremonies with which they think the Creator is gratified. If He can be gratified by any exertion of feeble mortals, it must be when they imitate His perfection by mutual benevolence and kindness. That you may long enjoy these blessings is the sincere prayer of your brother and friend,

W. Mathews.

With the above remarks the writer's early experience had something to do; and his feelings naturally took alarm at a mistaken tendency, evident to all who knew the amiable person to whom he alludes. Mr. William Mathews had in his boyhood felt the gloom and rigours of fanaticism under his father's roof, where he had ceased to reside for some years, although he frequently visited it, and was on the most affectionate terms with all his family, who might be said to idolize him. But in these visits he resisted with all the energies of his strong mind every after association with the ignorant and illiberal portion of his father's "brethren."

CHAPTER VIII.

Mr. Mathews's accident while performing at York—Death of his brother—Letter to Mr. Litchfield—Mrs. Mathews's illness and dying wishes—Letter to Mr. Litchfield—Death of Mrs. Mathews—A remarkable dream—Letter from Mr. Colman, offering Mr. Mathews an engagement in London—Correspondence on the subject.

THE September of this year (1801) brought with it much calamity and sorrow. Mr. Mathews, while performing the Obi-Woman in "Three-fingered Jack" (in compliance with a whim of his master), was crouching under a heavy platform, when the whole of it suddenly gave way and fell upon him! The audience and all present were much alarmed, and believed that he was killed, but after the tedious process of removing the whole of the apparatus, he was found alive, but senseless; nor was he restored to consciousness for a long time, when his bruises were found to be severe. He was then put to bed in a wretched state of suffering, covered with plaisters and bandages; and as "one sorrow seldom comes, but brings an heir that may succeed," a letter by the next morning's post filled his heart with the deepest anguish. The cause of this will be explained in the following bill, issued from the theatre the same day:

Theatre, Wakefield, Sept. 19th, 1801.

The unfortunate accident which Mr. Mathews met with last night in the entertainment of "Obi," and in addition to that misfortune, the melancholy news received this day of the sudden death of his brother, has so affected him as to render it utterly impossible for him to make his appearance on the stage this evening. Mr. Wilkinson is therefore under the absolute necessity of changing the play and farce to Dr. Goldsmith's favourite comedy of "She Stoops to Conquer," and "The Poor Soldier."

Thus, wounded alike in body and mind, Mr. Mathews continued incapable of any exertion of either for some time, as the annexed letter, dated a month after, to his kind friend Mr. Litchfield (by whom his brother's death had been communicated to him), will show.

To Mr. John Litchfield.

Doncaster, October 18th, 1801.

I know, my dear friend, that you will not attribute my silence to neglect, or imagine that I have not a proper sense of your kindness; but you are of course aware, from "sad experience," what must have been my feelings on the receipt of your melancholy, though kind and sensible, letter. I never received such a shock before. I have since found that it was mentioned in the Yorkshire papers three days before I received the unhappy news from you. I seldom miss reading the papers, but it so happened that just at that time we were travelling, and I had no opportunity of seeing them. To have received the intelligence in such a way would have been, if possible, a worse shock to my spirits. I feel many obligations to you, my dear and valued friend, for the manly and sensible consolation you offered in your letter.

Poor William! never were two brothers more enthusiastically attached to each other than that noble fellow and myself. Why would he be persuaded to go to that fatal country? I think it not at all irrational to say, that whoever goes voluntarily to that cursed climate is in some degree guilty of suicide; and if otherwise, those who persuade him are in some degree guilty of murder. How many thousand Europeans have found their graves in that destructive spot. But it is in vain to lament! The grief one naturally feels, however, at the loss of friends is considerably augmented when they die at a distance; for there is a melancholy satisfaction in reflecting that we had it in our power to soothe and comfort the last moments of a departed friend. Poor lamented William! what must have been his sensations! How must his sufferings have been aggravated by anticipating the severe shock his death must occasion to his beloved parents and family. I think it somewhat singular that the person who wrote on the subject should not mention the cause of his death.*

Yours unalterably, CHARLES MATHEWS.

Mr. Mathews had scarcely time allowed him to recover from the effects of this severe blow upon his affections, when another threatened to lay prostrate his domestic happiness and "desolate his hearth."

For many months past the natural delicacy of Mrs. Mathews's constitution had increased, and at length a more serious result seemed impending than was at first apprehended. The symptoms of decline hourly gained ground; her habits of confinement (for she still clung to the fallacious hope of gain by her pen, and was constantly devoted to its exercise), and her anxiety to contribute to her husband's narrow and inadequate means were such, that she neither allowed herself air nor proper exercise; and everybody who saw her, except (as it generally happens) those

* It was afterwards ascertained that he died of the yellow fever.

who were most interested in her safety, clearly perceived her danger. She grew weaker and weaker, but the activity of her mind, and her naturally good spirits, not only deceived her husband, but even herself; and it was not until the winter of this year that he apprehended any serious catastrophe. Physicians were then called in, and the "coming event cast its shadow before;" for the shocked husband was candidly told that medical aid could not avert the premature doom which hung over the head of his amiable wife.

She daily grew worse, and at last was constantly confined to her bed. Her own convictions may be learned from the following circumstance, which I must introduce with a compliment necessarily implied to myself. Mrs. Mathews, from the first moment of our meeting, conceived a violent affection for me; and, though I was many years her junior, she sought my friendship and regard by every means in her power. I was hardly capable of estimating her superiority of intellect, but I loved her sufficiently to think her society desirable; and I esteemed her husband as an honourable young man, and, to *my* perception, the most perfect comic actor in the world. In fact, I would stand at the side-scenes for a whole evening to see him act, so delighted was I with him; further than this, I was unconscious of partiality for him.

It happened that at one period, during the winter of this year, I had not been so recently to see my poor friend as I wished. The weather was severe, and her habitation distant from my own: I was, besides, constantly occupied at the theatre, where I received daily accounts of her state from her husband, whose depression was evidently increasing; and messages of the kindest nature passed through him between the invalid and myself. One evening, Mr Mathews told me that his wife was better, and was most desirous that I would go to see her the next day at a particular hour. Of course I obeyed her summons; and found her, as I had been led to expect, apparently much better. I complimented her upon the favourable change, which she told me was owing to a design she had conceived, and in the fulfilment of which she required me to aid her. I was delighted; but the invalid wished to postpone the explanation until her husband's return home, which she expected every moment. In the mean time, she chatted with cheerfulness, and would be propped up in bed, in order, as she said, to be able to look at us both while she revealed her project. Mr. Mathews at last entered the room, and uttered an exclamation of surprise and

pleasure at seeing the poor sufferer able to be raised up as she had been. She repeated to him what she had told me, that the cause of her present comfort was that which she had called us together to reveal; and after a preface, which agitated all parties very much (for she candidly avowed her conviction that it was out of the power of human skill to save her), she pathetically deplored leaving her husband, particularly as he would naturally marry again—*possibly* a woman who would less understand his valuable qualities of heart and mind than she had done. She saw, too, in that case, that he would be wretched, and this idea had preyed upon her feelings as her disease increased, and sharpened all her pains.

During a pause which her weakness rendered necessary, her hearers looked at each other with perplexity, and some suspicion that her intellects were wandering. She resumed, however, and after one or two affecting allusions to her own death, which she predicted must occur within a brief period from the time she was addressing us, turning to me, she began to expatiate upon her feelings and affection towards me, and deplored my partially unprotected state, which my extreme youth and inexperience rendered so dangerous. The thought of this, she declared, doubled her remaining cares in this world, and she conjured me, with her "dear husband," to take compassion upon her state, and the fears which so embittered her last days, by making a promise, jointly with him, to fulfil her dying wishes. The poor sufferer then took her husband's hand in hers, and kissed it fervently, and asking for mine, and pressing it also to her feverish lips in a solemn manner, which I remember made me tremble all over, called upon us both to pledge ourselves to become man and wife after her dissolution!

It would be impossible to describe our surprise, embarrassment, and distress. The proposition was truly painful to me, and it was impossible not to feel for the equally delicate position of Mr. Mathews, who rather impetuously reproved the poor invalid, for having drawn him into so extraordinary a dilemma; whilst I, covered with confusion and drowned in tears, sobbed with agony at the necessity I felt of rejecting the proposal, in which she said she believed she provided for the mutual good of the two beings she loved best. Dreading the worst consequences from the agitation and disappointment of her romantic project, I fell upon my knees at her bed-side, beseeching her pardon at the impossibility I felt to comply with her desire, from a total absence of any feeling but that of friendship for

her husband. As for poor Mr. Mathews, he seemed inexpressibly shocked and mortified at the situation into which he had been surprised, as well as for the distressing scene in which I had been implicated. After I had soothed her as far as possible, and reiterated my want of power to think of such an union, I quitted the chamber of my poor dying friend; her husband rushed after me, beseeching me not to harbour for one moment a suspicion that he had the remotest idea of the nature of his wife's intention, when he delivered her summons to me, and begging me to attribute her extraordinary conduct to a slight delirium, for such he felt assured it was.

However this might be, I ever after, during the remainder of her painful existence, dreaded and avoided any approach to confidential communication with her; and, I fear, saw less of her than a strict feeling of friendship would justify. It may also be imagined that Mr. Mathews and myself became more formal in our manners and intimacy than we otherwise should have been, until the painful impression gradually subsided.

The scene just described happened early in the year, and still the poor sufferer lived on in pain and difficulty, such as only an implicit reliance upon the goodness of Heaven could lend her resignation to support. In May, however, it will be seen, by the following letter of her husband to his friend in London, that hope was rapidly lessening; and his own words will best speak for his feelings, and the virtues of her whom he was about to lose, and will at the same time show his just appreciation of them.

York, May 16th, 1802.

Dear Jack,—Believe me, I am much gratified to find that you will not pass over an opportunity of writing to me; and that it is in my power to compliment you on your reformation in that respect, as your communications are much more frequent than they used to be. I assure you, my dear friend, that the sight of "Dear Stick" is one of the most pleasurable sensations I experience, and such sensations have of late been more than ever valuable.

I am in a most melancholy situation—six months' illness! Poor Eliza! she still continues lingering—the greatest of all sufferers, and one of the most patient. She coughs sometimes for nearly half an hour together, and this is succeeded by the most dreadful sight I ever saw—the vomiting of blood. Her bones are so nearly through the skin, that she can with difficulty turn in her bed. She rises for about half an hour in the day, and then can with difficulty crawl across the room. I have had the best advice I could procure; but all the medical men I have employed are of opinion she cannot recover, and it appears to me impossible that she can, for her lungs must certainly be very much

injured, if not nearly decayed. I assure you it is a severe stroke upon me. Independently of the prospect of losing a valuable and intelligent companion, the dreadful expenses of her illness are nearly the ruin of me. You may judge yourself how heavily it must fall on a country actor—six months' apothecaries' bills, with the mortifying reflection that all such assistance is in vain. But this is a melancholy subject to intrude on you; you must excuse my dwelling on it; in fact, I am not fit to write. My mind and body are harassed. I have not had a sound night's sleep these three months.

You may judge I was much flattered at hearing the opinion of Pope. It is indeed valuable to hear of such praise, and to me of all people. No one has met with more difficulties than I have; but I have persevered, and when I find myself thus spoken of, it is an assurance that my efforts have not been in vain. When I came here, Wilkinson thought I never should make an actor; certainly he saw me frequently to disadvantage. Now he is proud of reading his recantation. He told Mrs. Chapman (who, by the by, is a wonderful favourite here) that I was the most promising young man he ever remembered to have had—the most perfect and attentive to dress, and the greatest favourite he has had for many years, particularly in York. "Nay, ma'am, Fawcett was nothing to him" (meaning as a favourite). This, from him, you may imagine, is highly gratifying. I must tell you that by his desire I studied, or rather re-studied, *Falstaff;* I have played it twice, and have been highly complimented by him. He told Stephen Kemble, who played here four nights, and values himself much on *Falstaff*, that I played it better, and that he wanted humour. I have had the second best benefit here—96*l.* 15*s.* 0*d.* The manager only beat me, and he had a great bill—"Cabinet," and a Harlequin Pantomime. Mine is a plain bill—"The Beaux' Stratagem," and "The Lying Valet." Fifty pounds is reckoned a great house here. Emery, who was a great favourite, never got so high. I assure you I am most comfortably situated, and never expected to be so fortunate in the profession. I have the first business—first salary—first benefits—first acquaintance; and never had an unpleasant word with the manager, in the course of my engagement. I have before apologized to you for being guilty of egotism; but I am confident it is not unpleasant to you, and you are the only person to whom I could say so much. Thompson's opinion I am not a little proud of.* I disputed the point with him before he wrote, about *Ollapod's* jacket having the facing, and that I could not help. I maintain I dress it right. Fawcett's, from the description I have had of it, has nothing but extravagance to recommend it; I dress it as I see all apothecaries, in the cavalry dress.

I was much disappointed at not coming to London in Passion week. I had made up my mind some time before, and nothing but Mrs.

* Benjamin Thompson, then well known for his literary and dramatic taste, and recognised as the translator and adapter of "The Stranger." He was also a person of great local influence, so that his favourable opinion was worth obtaining.

Mathews's dangerous state could have prevented me; however, it was impossible to leave her.

Have you seen Dwyer? I never doubted his first reception in London; he has the knack of striking at first; but, as John Moody says, "he canna haud it." If he become a favourite in London, I shall think our York audience "plaguy hard to please." His benefit was only 26*l.*; but, to be sure, that is not always a criterion of estimation. Oh! I forgot to tell you that I have discovered I am a famous ventriloquist—at least, I have made the people believe so, and that is pretty nearly the same thing. I have done it on the stage in Hull and York with amazing applause, and am told I am a capital artist.

The poems are finished, and the printer only waits for subscribers' names. Now, my dear Jack, I think this long letter deserves an immediate answer. Do write; it will afford me peculiar consolation.

I am unalterably yours, CHARLES MATHEWS.

Mrs. Mathews's disorder (pulmonary consumption) increased hourly, and her dissolution was daily expected during a painful period of six months. Her excessive sufferings were borne by her with an equal mind throughout, a strong religious reliance, which never wavered, supporting her; and on the 25th of May the following *affiche* at the door of the theatre announced the release of this amiable young woman from her earthly trials, her illness having lasted upwards of a year and a half.

Theatre Royal, York.

May 25th, 1802.

The sudden death of Mrs. Mathews this afternoon rendering it impossible for Mr. Mathews to perform this evening, Mr. Wilkinson is under the absolute necessity of changing the opera of "The Cabinet," to Mr. Cumberland's comedy of "The Jew; or, a Peep at the Human Heart." The farce, Mr. W. is in hopes, can be done without the assistance of Mr. Mathews.

Although prepared—if expectation of the loss of those we love can be called preparation—for this mournful event, Mr. Mathews felt as if he had never contemplated the result of his wife's illness. The fits to which he had so long been occasionally subject assailed him with redoubled violence, and when he again appeared amongst us, he seemed almost as ill as his suffering wife had looked on the day of our distressing interview. When her death was announced to me by a mutual friend, I almost reproached myself that I had not sacrificed my own inclinations to her dying request. As it was, the recollection of it produced almost a coldness between the sad widower and myself for some time after, though in a few months both seemed to have recovered from it, and an easy friendship was resumed.

At the close of the summer a very remarkable instance occurred of a coincidence of dreams, befalling Mr. Mathews and myself, a circumstance which I am induced to relate, since it was attested by witnesses who severally and apart were informed of it, before the dreamers had power to communicate with each other, or their mutual friends.* Mr. Mathews's account of his impressions was as follows:—He had gone to rest, after a very late night's performance at the theatre, finding himself too fatigued to set up to his usual hour to read; but after he was in bed he discovered—as will happen when persons attempt to sleep before their accustomed time—that to close his eyes was an impossibility. He had no light, nor the means of getting one, all the family being in bed; but the night was not absolutely dark—it was only too dark for the purpose of reading; indeed, every object was visible. Still he endeavoured to go to sleep, but his eyes refused to close, and in this state of restlessness he remained, when suddenly a slight rustling, as if of a hasty approach of something, induced him to turn his head to that side of the bed whence the noise seemed to proceed; and there he clearly beheld the figure of his late wife, "in her habit as she lived," who, smiling sweetly upon him, put forth her hand as if to take his, as she bent forward. This was all he could relate; for, in shrinking from the contact with the figure he beheld, he threw himself out of bed upon the floor, where (the fall having alarmed his landlord) he was found in one of those dreadful fits to which I have alluded. On his recovery from it he related the cause of the accident, and the whole of the following day he remained extremely ill, and unable to quit his room.

There is nothing surprising in all this; for, admitting it not to be a dream, but one of those cases called nightmare, so frequently experienced (when the sufferer always believes himself under real influences), it was not a case to excite astonishment. The circumstance which rendered it remarkable, was that at the exact hour when this scene was taking place at a remote distance, a vision of the same kind caused me to be discovered precisely in the same situation. The same sleepless effect, the same cause of terror, had occasioned me to seize the bell-rope, in order to summon the people of the house, which, giving way

* Many of our familiar friends in London will remember with what earnestness and solemnity my husband related this account long after the period of its occurrence, when he thought his listeners were not disposed to scoff at such details, or be sceptical of their truth.

at the moment, I fell with it in my hand upon the ground. My impressions of this visitation (as I persisted it was) were exactly similar to those of Mr. Mathews. The parties with whom we resided at the time were perfect strangers to each other, and living widely apart, and they recounted severally to those about them the extraordinary dream, for such I must call it, though my entire belief will never be shaken that I was as perfectly awake as at this moment. These persons repeated the story to many, before they were requested to meet and compare accounts; there could consequently be no doubt of the facts, and the circumstance became a matter of much general interest amongst all those who knew us.

That the scene at the bedside of the dying woman simultaneously recurred to the dreamers when awake was natural enough, and was afterwards confessed. How far the facts which I have here related tended to the serious result of our continued intimacy I will not determine; but it is certain that neither of us regarded it as an impediment at a future period, or a just reason why we should not at last fulfil the desire of her whose wishes were made known to us at a time when it would have been discreditable to both, had we supposed ourselves able to comply with it at any future period of our lives.

In the space of eight months, Mr. Mathews had been deprived of two of his dearest ties: for the first loss he was totally unprepared, and the shock was appalling in its effect upon him; but of the latter he had been mercifully and gradually warned; and though he felt it deeply and sincerely, yet his grief naturally bore a milder aspect than it would otherwise have done. It might be said that his wife had been dead to him and the world long before the event, of her actual dissolution. Notwithstanding this, his own malady, as I have said, returned with alarming force, for it always recurred when mental suffering existed. He had several severe fits, which weakened his strength and retarded the renewal of the composure of which he had so long been deprived.

Fortunately an event, as unexpected as it was gratifying, occurred, which was calculated to rouse his dormant energies and to raise his mind from its distressing depression and disability. The master passion was again predominant, and though he sighed when he remembered that she who would have so gloried in his triumph was no longer a participator in his woe or weal, yet he could not conceal from himself or others the satisfaction which the offer now made to him gave his pride as well as his ambition.

This offer, "big with the fate of" Mathews, shall speak for itself, in its original form.

To Mr. Mathews.

Theatre Royal, Haymarket, 14th Sept. 1802.

SIR,—Your merits as an actor having been mentioned to me, give me leave to propose an engagement to you, for next year, in my theatre. It is my intention to commence the season positively on the 15th of next May, and to continue it to the 15th of the following September. Should you think it eligible to embrace the opportunity which I now offer to you, of performing for four months before a London audience, I beg you will be kind enough to inform me on what terms you will give me your assistance. At all events, I shall thank you for a speedy answer, directed to me, at Mr. Jewell's, 26, Suffolk-street, Charing-cross.

I am, sir, your obedient servant, G. COLMAN.

To George Colman, Esq.

Wakefield, September 23rd, 1802.

SIR,—I feel much flattered by the offer of an engagement in your theatre, but cannot come to any determination on the subject till I understand more particularly what situation you propose to me. I must beg leave to decline mentioning terms, as I am entirely ignorant of the salaries you usually give. I am so fortunate as to be in great fame on this circuit, in possession of the first cast of characters, and on the best of terms with my manager. It is indeed in every respect a most valuable situation, and it is only on very advantageous terms that I shall be induced to quit it. I most undoubtedly wish to perform in London, but must look for an ample compensation for resigning a lucrative situation for an engagement of only four months.

I shall be obliged to you, sir, to let me know what salaries you can afford to give, and if I accede to your wishes, what business will be allotted to me. This is a very material consideration, and I entreat that you will be as explicit as possible. I have performed in the York theatre the entire range of principal low comedy, and am well studied.

Have the goodness to inform me if at any part of the season any of the established London performers are to be engaged. I shall thank you for an answer as soon as possible. We leave this place on Tuesday, the 28th, after which time be kind enough to direct—Theatre, Doncaster.

I am, sir, your obedient servant, CHARLES MATHEWS.

The next letter from Mr. Colman is lost, but Mr. Mathews's reply will explain its general tendency.

To George Colman, Esq.

Doncaster, Oct. 5th, 1802.

Sir,—I agree with you, that my talents are my own property, and that I have a right to put a price on them; but I may set too high a value on those talents, and incur the charge of monstrous vanity. You offer handsomely, yet still I wish you had mentioned terms. However, as that seems the only bar to our coming to a final determination, I will, rather than be the cause of any farther delay, waive my objections, and speak decidedly on the subject. I must confess the style of your letter is so liberal and gentlemanly, that the desire I feel to engage with you is increased. With respect to my situation here, I can only repeat what I have already said. It will be tedious and uninteresting to you to particularize the many circumstances which make this circuit valuable to me. In leaving it I make a great sacrifice, both as to profit and pleasure; therefore, considering the advantages I resign, the shortness of your engagement, and the hazard of remaining out of a situation at the close of it, I cannot in justice to myself think of resigning my present certain income under 10*l.* per week. If your scheme will afford such a salary, I am willing immediately to close an engagement with you. I beg an answer as soon as possible,

And am, sir, your obedient servant, Charles Mathews.

To Mr. Mathews.

Suffolk-street, Oct. 8, 1802.

Sir,—The terms which you have proposed are certainly high, and perhaps unprecedented, for a performer who has not yet felt the pulse of a London audience; but the reasons stated for thus fixing your ultimatum appear to be founded on justice, to put vanity out of the question. I waive, therefore, all mention of any risk incurred on my part, in my new speculation, and embrace your offer. But to prevent all mistakes, permit me to state precisely what I conceive to be the engagement. Ten pounds a-week and a benefit, of which benefit you pay the usual charges. You will perform from the 15th May to the 15th September inclusive. If you engage in London after your appearance with me, you give me the preference in a re engagement. If you think any short legal memorandum requisite between us, I am willing to enter into it. If you conceive the letters that pass between us as sufficient, I am quite content that it should remain an agreement upon honour. Pray send me two lines speedily, which will be conclusive. I will (when we meet in the summer) do everything in my power to contribute to your reputation with the public, and your comfort in my theatre.

I am, sir, your obedient humble servant, G. Colman.

P.S.—Of course your attendance will be expected in town a week or ten days (as I begin with novelties) previously to the opening of the theatre.

To George Colman, Esq.

Doncaster, Oct. 13, 1802.

Sir,—I ought to apologise for neglecting to give you an immediate answer, but I was absent from Doncaster when your letter arrived, and hurry of business has since prevented me.

Nothing now remains but my final decision for your satisfaction. I accept the terms, and will be with you at the time proposed. On my part I feel perfectly satisfied with the letters that have passed between us, and am content it should remain an agreement upon honour. I cannot for a moment think of the necessity for a legal agreement with a man who, in every part of our negotiation, has behaved so liberally. I thank you for your warm assurances of assistance, and hope I shall prove worthy of your kindness. The only anxiety I now feel is as to my appearance before the awful tribunal of the metropolis. Much depends on a judicious choice of character. Pray satisfy me (when you are at leisure) if you positively intend to open with new pieces. Original characters will be undoubtedly desirable; but it will be necessary for you to know my particular *forte*, and satisfactory to all to know in what kind of character you propose to introduce me. A few lines explaining your intentions on this subject will much oblige me. If I have the good fortune to succeed with the public, I feel a perfect reliance, from your general character for gentlemanly conduct to your performers, of comfort in your theatre.

I am, sir, your obedient servant, Charles Mathews.

To George Colman, Esq., Theatre Royal, Haymarket.

Hull, February 14th, 1803.

Dear Sir,—I have anxiously waited in expectation of the pleasure of a letter from you. I much wished to hear your further opinion with respect to the characters most proper to fix on for my first appearance. I wrote to you at some length upon this subject, which letter (together with the list of characters in which I am studied) I presume you received. However, I should not have troubled you again on this subject, as we have yet good time to deliberate; but I can no longer delay mentioning to you a circumstance of considerable importance to myself, and in which you may in some degree be hereafter interested. It is, therefore, necessary that I impart to you a secret, which none of my friends in London are in possession of. In all human probability before I leave Yorkshire I shall take unto myself a wife. Now, sir, if you please you may, as I said before, be interested in this matter, as I write to you now to solicit an engagement for the lady. As (of course) you will not give me credit for impartiality, I shall forbear in this letter saying anything as to the merits of the one in question. If you have any room for a second singer have the goodness to let me know, and I will be more particular in my next. Her name is Jackson, a pupil of Mr. Kelly; she has supported the first line of singing in the

York company. I think she would be useful if you have a vacancy, as she is very young, and her appearance much in her favour. I do not wish you to make any positive engagement until you are satisfied whether she is worthy your notice. I make this early application, fearing that if I delayed it your arrangements might preclude the possibility of offering her a situation.

If you think it possible that you can make room for her, it will give me great pleasure.

I am, sir, your obedient servant, C. MATHEWS.

It is scarcely necessary to explain that the announced bride in the foregoing letter was the same person who only twelve-months previously, at the bedside of her dying friend, implicitly believed such an union impossible! May it not be, as Shakspeare has declared, that "Marriage comes of destiny?" I am sometimes disposed to think so.

To John Litchfield, Esq.

York, Feb. 27th, 1803.

DEAR JACK,—Why don't you write? Can you give me any information about the Haymarket scheme? Is it expected to succeed, or are we country actors to be sacrificed in the speculation? If it fails, I do not know what is to become of us. Do you know any performers engaged, that you have not given us in the *Mirror?* Why does Colman give his new comedy to Covent Garden? He has not written to me lately. Let me know, pray do. If this does not provoke him to write, I know not what will. (*Aside.*)

By the by, I have taken half a sheet of paper to write to you, fearing to swell the packet, and had almost forgot that I had something to communicate to you of consequence. Then, to tell you a secret, which I wish all the world to know, I am going to be married, and that very shortly, too. Therefore write to me directly, and say you rejoice at it, and wish me happy, or I shall think you are no friend to the married state. I have not room to enter into particulars; but say with Solus, "She is my choice." Who? you'll say. The first letter of her name is Jackson, of Wilkinson's company, a pupil of Kelly: you have heard of her before. I shall not enter into encomiums, as you will consider me partial, and not think it good evidence. Besides, I have neither time nor room to say any more. Give me your consent, that is all I ask. Club with my father this week for a frank, and let me hear from you. "Adieu, thou dreary pile."

Yours ever most truly, C. MATHEWS.

CHAPTER IX.

George Colman at York—Tate Wilkinson's reception of him—The York performers—Mr. Colman's dramatic reading—Mr. Mathews's second marriage—Wedding incidents—Miss De Camp—Mr. Colman's letter to Mr. Mathews—Parting interview between Mr. Mathews and Tate Wilkinson.

In March Mr. Colman, accompanied by his son, Captain George Colman, arrived in York, probably induced by an anxiety to see the actor he had taken upon trust, and to satisfy himself, as he hoped to do, that his blind bargain was not likely to prove a lame one.

Here commenced a friendship between Mr. Colman and my husband, which never suffered a moment's interruption. During Mr. Colman's stay in York, he and his son supped nightly with the young actor at the close of the performance, and it would have been difficult on these occasions, when they separated, to determine which felt most pleased with the other; so that when the manager returned to London, he was prepared to welcome a friend whom he had every expectation at the same time of establishing as a favourite with the town. In short, he was immediately impressed with Mr. Mathews's talents both on and off the stage, and those who have experienced the fascination of Mr. Colman's society may without difficulty understand how completely he charmed his new acquaintance. Mr. Mathews's application for an engagement for his intended wife was answered with cordial kindness. He had taken his future manager to see the young lady perform *Harriet* in "The Guardian," and she was immediately engaged.

As might be expected, Mr. Wilkinson's gentlemanlike feeling and hospitable habits were displayed on the arrival of this distinguished visitor, to whom, notwithstanding he came to rob him of his trump card, he could not omit those attentions which a resident is expected to offer to strangers. Although he was at the time much more than usually an invalid, he requested Mr. Colman and his son to dine with him every day during their

stay. On the first visit, there was scarcely more than a family party, Mr. Mathews and Mr. Cummins being the only persons invited to meet them; and it was an early dinner, in order to allow the two actors time to dress for their evening duties. Mr. Colman, who was desirous of enlisting some more recruits for his opening campaign, was naturally inquisitive as to who and what he might expect to see during his short stay, and asked for the bill of fare for the evening, this being his first opportunity of seeing the York performers. He was told that the play was to be "The School for Scandal." The London manager was pleased at this, and eagerly inquired what sort of a *Charles* they had, for at the time he wanted a dashing actor in that line. His attention was directed to a respectable gentleman who sat opposite to him, who had mumbled his dinner, and whose well-powdered head had a cauliflower appearance, and his face the visible impress of sixty winters. "Mr. Cummins is the *Charles*," said Tate. Mr. Cummins bowed to Mr. Colman with the precision of the old school, in confirmation of the manager's statement. Mr. Colman started, bowed in return with an unnatural grin of courtesy, and then took a pinch of snuff in nervous haste.

After a short pause, however, being desirous to do away the appearance of the embarrassed surprise he was too conscious of having shown, Mr. Colman made inquiries as to the ladies of the theatre. "Paul and Virginia" was mentioned as one of the novelties to be performed in the course of his visit, and he caught at this information in order to ask who was to play *Virginia* (expecting, as he afterwards told Mr. Mathews, that his intended wife, to whom he had been introduced in the morning, would be named); but his attention was directed again to one of the party present, and he was informed that "Mrs. John," so Mrs. J. Wilkinson was always called, would personify the youthful heroine. This lady was a bulky matron, who certainly had once been young, and still was handsome. Mr. Colman at the first glance again started, and again resorted to the friendly aid of his snuff-box, now fairly thrown off his balance. At length, turning round with something like an angry feeling, in despair of finding much rising talent for his purpose, he whispered, "Fore gad, Mathews, yours is a superannuated company!"

It was on this occasion that we first had the delight of hearing Mr. Colman read. The comedy of "John Bull" was on the point of being "got up" at York, and Tate requested as a favour

that the author would give the performers the advantage of his instructions in their several characters, by reading the play in the green-room. This indeed proved a treat: those who were to act in the comedy, and those who were not, alike enjoyed it. It is for those only who have experienced the delight of hearing Mr. Colman read his dramatic productions, to guess the pleasure with which his perfect representation of every character was listened to by the performers, proving that one of the best dramatists of his day might also have been one of the finest actors.

The time now arrived when Mr. Mathews's feelings were to be put to a very severe trial. He was again about to quit the secure present for a doubtful future; the numerous warm friends which his private worth had drawn about him, an unprecedented range of professional business, and last, but not least, the kind, though eccentric Tate, to whom he found himself strongly attached, and to whom he was grateful for a thousand acts of kindness which that good old man was so much in the habit of showing to the deserving.

Mr. Mathews's marriage was necessarily arranged to take place prior to his leaving York, since it could not with propriety be deferred till his arrival in London, his intended wife having no protector up to town but himself. On the 28th of March, therefore, the ceremony was solemnized by the Rev. Mr. Parker, at St. Helen's church, York.

On this occasion some incidents occurred of rather an unusual character. Mr. Denman, already mentioned, was requested to act the part of father, and, as it is called, to give the bride away. Unfortunately, he had been seized during the preceding night with a severe fit of gout, but unwilling to disappoint his friend, he determined not to acquaint him with his illness, but to proceed to the church at the appointed hour, at whatever risk, in a sedan-chair, the obtaining of which at such short notice occasioned a little delay. In the meantime, the bride and bridegroom had, as arranged, reached the spot by different roads, in order to give as little publicity to the occasion as possible, for the young lady had discovered, to her infinite annoyance, that instead of being married with a licence, she had been "asked" for three successive Sundays in the parish churches of her own and her future husband's respective dwellings—a process which was cautiously kept from her at the time. Being under age, her mother's approval was obtained, but this was rendered nugatory by the absence of her husband from England, whose permission the

law also demanded. Thus, like Lydia Languish, the bride elect had "lived to be called *spinster*," and had been obliged to "ask the consent of every butcher and baker in the parish" to her marriage. It was settled that she should leave home with a female friend, in her usual walking dress, and enter at a private door of the church. Accordingly, when they arrived they found the intended husband waiting to receive them, with the bridesmaid,* "clad in robes of virgin white, who absolutely started at the first view of her friend's *black* silk spencer and beaver hat. But the cause of this unusual dress was explained while they waited for the arrival of the "father" (Mr. Denman). The clergyman was already at the altar preparing for the ceremony, when the principal entrance-door was thrown open, the sedan admitted, and carried solemnly along the aisle of the church, by two grave-looking chairmen, straight up to the foot of the altar. The clergyman's looks expressed the amazement this apparition naturally created, and the bridal party were totally unable to account for it, until the vehicle was set down, and the head being thrown back, Mr. Denman, with flanneled ankles and black cloth shoes, was lifted up by the chairmen. His crutches, which had, as it were, been looking out of the side-windows of the sedan as it proceeded up the aisle, were carefully placed under his arms, and there he stood resting upon them, with a countenance of affected gaiety, and, as if unconscious of pain, his ample person dressed in a light-coloured coat, of a mixture then in fashion, called "pepper and salt." The rest of the party were beckoned up by the clerk, and Miss De Camp promptly advanced, the bridegroom hanging back with his intended upon his arm, in order to recover a little from the fit of laughter which he had vainly endeavoured to suppress, at the unexpected sight of his friend in the sedan-chair. The clergyman glanced from Miss De Camp's juvenile figure to that of Mr. Denman with great severity, as if he would have said, "In your state, I think it would have been more decent to have deferred the ceremony," for he evidently mistook the young lady "all in white" for the bride, she having previously placed herself close to the *pepper and salt* of the supposed bridegroom. He nevertheless prepared to commence the service, in order to unite the unmatched couple who stood forward, when Mr. Mathews thought it high time to assert his claim upon the reverend gentleman's office, and after a little explanation and embarrassment on all sides, the white

* Miss Adelaide De Camp, sister to Mrs. Charles Kemble.

lady and he of the sedan took their proper positions, the destined couple stood forward, and the irrevocable knot was tied.

In the meantime the defrauded "public," who had got an inkling of what was going on, resented their exclusion from the church by surrounding the doors just as the ceremony was concluded, determined to witness the exit of the parties. This determination the chairmen communicated to their fare, when summoned by the clerk to remove Mr. Denman, who, though well seasoned, as he might be supposed to be from the united qualities of his dress, was nevertheless afraid of the coldness of the church in his precarious state of health, and suffered himself to be borne through the crowd in his sedan, having first undertaken to send a carriage for the quartette he left behind, who were too bashful to think of walking through the mob of gazers assembled to witness the first appearance of the young couple in their new characters, without paying. Mr. Denman was carried along amidst shouts of merriment from the people collected, which the poor gouty man was obliged to take in good part, affecting good humour and unconcern. Shortly afterwards a chaise drew up to the church-door, and four "precious souls agog" scrambled into it as fast as they could, and were driven one door round the corner, to their destined shelter, the crowd from St. Helen's-square and the private entrance arriving at the same moment to see them alight.

Thus it seems as if one of the most serious events of Mr. Mathews's life must necessarily be attended by something comic.

To Charles Mathews, Esq., Theatre Royal, York.

London, April 30th.

Dear Mathews,—I send you a hasty scrawl to put your mind at ease. I am most fully sensible that you are anxious to be just to all parties; therefore do not permit any qualms of conscience (on my account) to embarrass you while you are making your public bow to the good folks at York on the 7th May. The sooner, however, you can be with me, after that period, the better for our mutual interests. Write me a line by return of post, to say if I may hope to see you on the 10th. We can settle nothing (relative to your *début*) till we meet; and be assured that I will press nothing upon you that is repugnant to your feelings. Make my compliments to Mrs. Mathews. George sends his remembrances to you, and begs me to assure you, spite of your calumnies, that he has not been drunk above seven nights in the week since we parted from you at Tadcaster. Adieu. Rely on my being warmly interested in your success in London.

And believe me, sincerely yours, G. Colman.

P.S.—Don't take off Suett again till we meet.

The parting interview between Tate and his young friends was affecting. The manager was exceedingly ill, scarcely able indeed to bear the presence of any one; and when Mr. Mathews expressed a hope that he would soon be better, he checked him, saying, "Do not hope it; it is unkind to wish me to live in pain, and unable to feel enjoyment. No, my children; I do not wish to live. I should like to stay over the August race-week to see my old friend Fawcett, and hear how the audience receive their former favourite, and then I shall be content to die."*

The dear old man then shook Mr. Mathews affectionately by the hand, calling back his "grandchild," as he often called me, to kiss him once more, and, as he prophetically said, "for the last time."

* It is remarkable that his wish was granted exactly as he expressed it, as will be seen by a letter in its proper place.

CHAPTER X.

Arrival in London of Mr. Mathews and his young wife—Their reception at the paternal home—Gloom of the house—Removal to Manchester-street—Old Mr. Mathews listening to his son's songs and stories—Mr. Mathews's first appearance in London—Anecdote of Mr. Cumberland—Letter from Tate Wilkinson—Mr. Mathews's success in "Love Laughs at Locksmiths"—His *Mr. Wiggins*—His engagement at Liverpool—Letter from Mr. Lewis—His prediction—Birth of Mr. Mathews's son.

On our arrival in London in May I entered the abode of my husband's serious relations with some trepidation, remembering their self-congratulations on their son's first marriage, that he had escaped falling into the dreaded fangs of one belonging to the proscribed class in which he had enrolled himself. This alarm was, however, speedily dissipated by my first encounter with my husband's family. His young sister, a well-educated and lively girl, immediately became attached to me. His mother also, a gentlewoman in ideas, deportment and language, and the benevolent old man who might have suggested to Goldsmith his "Vicar of Wakefield," treated me with great kindness. According to my idea of Parson Adams, Mr. Mathews's father was a personification of the character; guileless as sensible, he was an image of simplicity and goodness.

The house had a very sombre appearance. I recollect that my spirit quailed when I first entered the drawing-room. The wainscot everywhere was completely covered with small oval frames of ebony, surrounding engraved portraits of saints—"Great (indeed) was the company of the preachers." All gloomy and dark, they seemed by their presence to forbid any approach to gaiety, and frowned disapprovingly upon all laughter. With the exception of the dado of the room, not an inch was spared by these worthies for anything besides. No sinful mirrors relieved the aching sight; no ornaments but those of the conventicle met the eye. Even the light summer attire of youth seemed unnatural, if not offensive, in such a place, and out of keeping, as a painter would have said, with the scene;

yet these worthy people had no gloom in their hearts. I have often laughed since with Mr. Mathews at the recollection of his father's gallery of pulpit-performers, and amused myself to see the similar propensity in the son to collect portraits of professional stars, though in another line.

As soon as the opening of the Haymarket drew near, Mr. Mathews removed to a pleasant lodging in Manchester-street, Manchester-square, for, of course, we could not then accommodate our hours to those of his father and mother. We could neither have eaten nor prayed at their time. During our stay with them we all knelt down together, before and after every meal, while old Mr. Mathews pronounced a lengthened prayer, and before bedtime, of course, all the household were present.

Although we removed from the Strand, I was almost daily with the family, and perfectly happy with them. This made my husband very comfortable; and his liberal father, although he would not see his son act, was most anxious, "since he had embraced such a profession," that he should prosecute it with as much credit and success as possible. He would allow—nay, invite—his son to give him "a taste of his quality," and complacently listen to his songs and stories, now and then laughing till tears poured down his face; his wife was equally delighted. My husband had once drawn from him his slow consent to go to a private box at the Haymarket to see him represent *Mr. Wiggins*, in which character his face, when made up, so much resembled that of his father; but somehow at the eleventh hour he repented—consistency triumphed over inclination—so that he never saw his son perform. Mrs. Mathews would, I am sure, have gone; but, out of respect to her husband's opinion, she and her daughter abstained from visiting the theatre.

On the 15th May Mr. Mathews made his first appearance in London at the Haymarket Theatre, in the characters of *Jabel* in "The Jew," and *Lingo* in "The Agreeable Surprise," with the most unqualified success.* The account of his acting, given in one of the newspapers of the following day (all of which praised him highly), stated that when he was encored in his songs he produced a laughable alteration in the last verse on repetition, which caused much merriment. This was a novelty then, but every one will remember with what effect he made such variations in after years when encored. On the following night their Majesties George III. and Queen Charlotte, and the

* He took his farewell in York, in the character of *Proteus*, in "Family Quarrels," and *Ralph*, in "Lock and Key."

five princesses and suite, were present to a repetition (by command) of the first night's performances, which went off with increased effect.

The following is a characteristic anecdote of the author of "The Jew." Mr. Cumberland was always remarkable for his fastidious feelings about the performance of any of his characters; and at the same time for his courteous desire to compliment everybody as much as was possible. He had been attracted by the novelty of a play of his acted in London by a company made up entirely of provincial performers, and at the dropping of the curtain came round to the green-room, being desirous to express his approbation of what he had witnessed. Elliston received what was due to his really beautiful representation of *Sheva;* and the *Jabel* of the night entering the room, dressed for the after piece, was by Mr. Cumberland's desire presented to him. He delighted the young comedian, by assuring him that the part had never been better played; and that in figure, dress, and acting, he was the very thing he (the author) had intended. "I wrote the part, and ought to know—it was perfect. I assure you, sir, I never was more gratified; but" (with irrepressible irritation) "you spoke so low, I couldn't hear a word you said."

Immediately after his appearance at the Haymarket Theatre, Mr. Mathews naturally made his old manager acquainted with the result; and, in the plenitude of his satisfaction, described his success exultingly, and probably in very animated language. In reply, he received from Tate Wilkinson the following letter, the last he ever wrote to him.

Mr. Mathews, Haymarket, London.

Dear Sir,—I am truly pleased at your success, and think it a feather in the cap of the York company. But you write to me as easily as if I was in a recovered state: instead of that, this is a violent fatigue. I had nearly 90*l.* Monday night, at Leeds; but I am not equal to be pleased, or to eat anything—am worse than ever. Your letter is now before me. I cannot get through it; yet you write to me as if I was as gay as yourself. I want not to see any July *Richards* or *Octavians:* not but tell Mr. Elliston if he can come on the 7th Sunday of Trinity, I shall be glad to see him. Tell him to write by return. He can play in London on Monday, August 12. Have no strength or time for the comp^ts^. Am wishing good health.

Yours in great pain, Tate Wilkinson.*

P.S.—This a great fatigue and pain to me.

* Tate Wilkinson died on 25th August, 1803.

Mr. Mathews's success during the season continued evenly, until Arthur Griffinhoofe (alias George Colman) produced his "Love Laughs at Locksmiths," in which Mr. Mathews, in his first original part, *Risk*, produced a very great effect. The song of "The Farm Yard" introduced to the notice of the town his imitative talents in one form, and the change of appearance in the second act, and his song of "Unfortunate Miss Bailey," at once established the dependence of the public upon his powers, and made him the favourite he never ceased to be. *Risk* may be recorded as his first great part, written for him; all characters besides, at least for many years, were in fact mere outlines left for him to fill up by dint of his genius by authors who felt it necessary to write words for others. One of his most popular characters, *Buskin*, in "Killing no Murder," was almost all his own, except the situations, and where he had to give cues to the good things set down for that pet with all comic authors, Mr. Liston.

His next new character of weight this season, was *Mr. Wiggins*, "a gross fat man," in the farce called "Mrs. Wiggins," which succeeded so far as his performance went, and was for his sake often represented, though the piece was certainly weak. His dress and face in this part were admirable, as well as his acting; and were introduced by Harlowe into his painting of Mr. Mathews in five characters, now in the collection of the Garrick Club, with the rest of Mr. Mathews's theatrical gallery.

At the close of the Haymarket season, Mr. Mathews entered into an engagement with Mr. Colman for the three following seasons; a conclusive evidence, it may be supposed, of his success in London. In the autumn, he proceeded to join the Liverpool company for the ensuing winter, at a large salary for a provincial theatre. It was then the property of Messrs. Lewis and Knight; the Lewis of merry memory, and Mr. Knight (not "Little Knight"), the then popular performer, also a principal actor at Covent Garden, and the originial *Farmer Ashfield*, in "Speed the Plough." In this piece Mr. Knight introduced the Somersetshire dialect with great effect, which was, I believe, banished from the stage by the more humorous dialect of Yorkshire, which Emery made so popular, and left as a sort of legacy to all succeeding actors of countrymen.

The following letter from Mr. Lewis will show the estimation in which Mr. Mathews's talent, even at this early period of his London reputation, was held, not only by the public, but by first-rate professors.

To Charles Mathews, Esq.

Liverpool, 17th August, 1803.

Dear Sir,—I had the favour of your letter, and am happy to be aided by such merit as yours. I have the book and music of "Love Laughs at Locksmiths," but will certainly retain it till you come here. If "Mrs. Wiggins" is printed, I wish you would desire Mr. Hill, our copyist, to send a book down, and I will have it ready against your arrival.

The time in which you would be most desirable to me would be on Friday, the 9th of September, and the whole of the following week, but I fear there is little chance of so desirable an event. On the 19th of September Braham and Storace make their first appearance, and I should very much wish you to be in most of their operas—"The Cabinet," "Castle of Andalusia," "Family Quarrels," "Siege of Belgrade," "Haunted Tower," &c. "No Song," &c. "Grandmother," "Prize," &c.

With good wishes, I am, dear sir, your obedient servant,

Wm. Thos. Lewis.

It would be of essential consequence if you could play here (no matter in what) on Saturday, 17th of September; and perhaps Colman would for once indulge you by leaving you out a night, which would enable you to do so.

It is rather curious that Mr. Lewis predicted that Mr. Mathews would some day be a favourite in London, in the same line of characters which that great comedian then sustained in so unrivalled a manner. He was performing his original part of *Tom Shuffleton* in "John Bull," and observed to my husband, that it was a part *he* should undertake, adding, "It is my opinion that it is in your line, and when I am gone, you'll find it out, and be my successor in eccentric comedy." At the time this was said, Mr. Mathews had not an idea that he could possibly present himself in such a part, his acting being confined to old men, countrymen, and quaint low comedy; he was in fact exceedingly amused at such a prediction, and repeated it as a good jest. In a few years afterwards, however, he found himself sustaining with great effect *Goldfinch*, *Rover*, and other characters of the same cast, a line of acting which he probably would have pursued, had not a serious accident checked his efforts, and in his own opinion rendered him altogether unfit for the drama.

At the end of December in this year, a letter from my husband to his friend Mr. Litchfield announced an event which it will be seen gave him at the time a new delight, and continued ever after, without a single drawback, to afford him the greatest happiness.

To John Litchfield, Esq.

Liverpool, December 27th, 1803.

Dear Jack,—It is with the most exquisite pleasure I inform you that I am the father of a fine boy, at least so says the nurse, who would fain persuade me he is something uncommon. However, both mother and child, thank God, are extremely well, and, to go beyond the usual phrase, better than could be expected. My feelings on this occasion you may judge of, for as my fear and anxiety during the suspense of yesterday were severe, so is the joy I feel at the sight of my child, and safety of my beloved wife, infinitely more delightful than any other sensation I ever experienced.

I am happy beyond measure,—"who would not be a father?" You will perceive, by the size of the paper, that I did mean to write a long letter, but I am sure you will excuse me. I have several letters to write to-day, you may suppose; think of my parental feelings! You will allow that this letter is written in a happy style. I am much gratified by your account of "Love laughs;" it is another proof of the great value of original parts. Remember me most kindly to Mrs. Litchfield.

Yours ever, Charles Mathews.

Mr. Mathews's father and mother were highly delighted at the birth of their first grandchild, and heartily welcomed the little stranger. As a postscript to his daughter's congratulations, the grandfather added the following lines.

My dear Charles,—Give my love to dear Anne, and tell her I am happy at her safety. I wish, but not dictate, that you would name the child either by your own name or mine, or both, but not William, lest it might excite your mother's grief.

Yours, dear Charles, J. Mathews.

Without hesitation "Charles James" was decided upon, and the tiny possessor of these names was promised to the church, if he inclined to that profession on attaining an age to choose for himself. The announcement of this intention was received by my husband's parents with gratified feeling, but with no rigid dependence upon an event which rested with the young man himself, who was enjoined, through us, not to enter upon such a profession unwillingly; his grandfather adding, "That he might be a good man without being a clergyman; but to force him to be a clergyman might tend to make him a bad man."

CHAPTER XI.

Re-opening of the Haymarket Theatre—Mr. Bannister, Jun.—Illness of Mr. Mathews's father—First appearance of Mr. Mathews at Drury-lane Theatre —Mr. Sheridan reading the part of *Sir Peter Teazle*—"School for Friends"—Mr. Mathews's retentive memory—His introduction to "Anacreon Moore"—Mr. Raymond's proposal to Mr. Mathews to turn book-auctioneer.

At the accustomed period in 1804 the Haymarket Theatre re-opened, with the addition of Mr. Bannister, jun. (as he was then distinguished, his father being still alive), Mr. Colman having previously assured Mr. Mathews that this engagement should not interfere with him; but that he felt it necessary, from the general weakness of his new company, to obtain an additional prop to support it. Mr. Colman kept his word; and, to prove that there was no falling off in his attraction with the town in consequence, the following observations in one of the leading journals appeared (after the production of one of the novelties of the season, "Guilty or Not Guilty").

Of the actors, Mathews must be placed in the foremost rank. To the character of *Triangle* he did more justice than any actor of the day could have done; he was less flippant in his manner than Fawcett —equally natural with Bannister—less laboured than Munden and with a felicity of countenance that predisposed the audience to mirth before he opened his lips.

His second season, indeed, served only to increase his popularity. He fairly shared with Mr. Bannister the applause of each night; and in every new piece was pointedly considered both by manager and audience.

So rapidly did Mr. Mathews's popularity increase, that an offer was made him by the proprietors of Drury-lane Theatre in the course of the summer for the ensuing season. With all the delicate secrecy that the intimation required, he was told that he was engaged with the view of his becoming the successor of Mr. Suett, whose health was precarious, and the duration of whose professional powers was consequently un-

certain. Mr. Mathews signed an engagement for himself and his wife for five years.

During this summer the health of Mr. Mathews's father rapidly declined, and towards its close he was so strongly impressed with his approaching dissolution, that he summoned my husband to his cottage at Whetstone. A most affecting scene followed. This good man felt at peace within himself; he grieved only for those whom he saw lamenting at the thought of parting from him. Entertaining a blessed hope of future happiness himself, he desired to leave all he loved on earth in that peace and goodwill towards each other that he had throughout practised. He desired to read his will to his family, and to be assured that no heart-burnings or discontent would follow the distribution of his estate. It may be imagined that his liberality and the many calls of his brethren precluded his leaving any considerable property. He bespoke my husband's indulgence for having divided a certain portion equally between him and his sister. This might, he said, be thought as unjust as it was irregular; but he appealed to his son's generosity not to consider it as a proof of unkindness, but as a result of his reflection that, as his daughter was unmarried, and might possibly be soon unprotected, upon the loss of her mother, who had been a great invalid for years, she would require more than he should otherwise have left her; while his son appeared rapidly rising into easy circumstances, and probably would soon find even the moiety that was intended for him of little moment.* It need not be added, that Mr. Mathews declared himself perfectly contented with his father's intended disposition of his property. After this the good old man seemed to be better; and though he continued ill, his son hoped that the final blow might yet be averted for a time.

The autumn arrived, and with it my husband's first appearance at Drury-lane Theatre, on the 17th of September, in the arduous character of *Don Manuel*, in "She would and She would not."

Theatre Royal Drury-lane, Sept. 17th, 1804.

Last night the lively comedy of "She would and She would not," was performed at this house. The chief novelty was the *entrée* of Mr. Mathews in the part of *Don Manuel*. After gaining a high degree of provincial reputation, this gentleman was engaged by Mr. Colman, and has acted with great applause for two seasons at the Haymarket. He is certainly well entitled to a situation at one of the winter theatres.

* This moiety my husband never claimed.

Testy, fond, doting old men, starved lacqueys, starch sectarians, and divers other eccentric characters, find in him a very humorous representative. He has the rare merit among comedians of this cast, always to be consistent with his assumed character. If he be a Quaker, he does not smoke his own primness. If he act the hoary lover, he does not seem sensible that he is making himself ridiculous. He is perfectly free from grimace and extravagance. He chose *Don Manuel* very judiciously for his *début* on these boards, as it affords ample scope for a display of his peculiar powers. He went through the part very successfully, but was more particularly happy in the scene when he thinks that all his cares are over by the marriage of his daughter with the pretended *Don Philip*. The manner in which he dandled his pocket-handkerchief, as his future grandson to spring from the union of the two females, convulsed the audience for several minutes. His reception was flattering in the extreme.

The melancholy event of his father's death precluding a second appearance in the character which he played the first night, Mr. Mathews was compelled to perform, on the 11th of October, *Sir Peter Teazle*, in "The School for Scandal;" for little leisure was allowed to him for the indulgence of sorrow—an actor's private feelings (happily perhaps) are required to be merged in his public duties. Sheridan's* celebrated comedy was to introduce to the town that charming actress, Miss Duncan,† from the Theatre Royal, York, in *Lady Teazle*. Mr. Sheridan, then proprietor of Drury-lane Theatre, expressed his desire to Mr. Mathews that he would allow the author to read the character to him, and give his idea of the manner he, Mr. Sheridan, thought that *Sir Peter* should be acted.

Mr. Mathews had many misgivings on this subject, and most embarrassing it proved in the result; for so totally unlike was Mr. Sheridan's reading of the character from every other conception of it, that it was next to impossible for the actor to adopt any one of his suggestions. Had it not been known that Mr. Sheridan was the author of the play, it would have been

* Richard Brinsley Sheridan, statesman, wit, and dramatist, born in Dublin in 1751, and educated at Harrow, author of "The Rivals," "The Duenna," "The Trip to Scarborough," "The Critic," and "The School for Scandal," the two last being pronounced by Lord Byron to be respectively the best farce and the best comedy ever produced on the English stage. Sat in Parliament as member for Stafford, Westminster, and Ilchester. He was a most gifted orator, and his speeches on the trial of Warren Hastings are still quoted as models of eloquence. Dissipation and extravagance brought him to ruin, and he died in debt and misery in 1816.

† Afterwards Mrs. Davison, a most admirable actress and excellent woman, who died during the past year.

difficult to credit his acquaintance with the part in question. The consequence may be anticipated. When the night came, Mr. Sheridan was dissatisfied with Mr. Mathews's performance (as it was said in the green-room he had been with every previous representative of it, including King the original), and after the second night Mr. Wroughton resumed the part, taken from him by Mr. Sheridan's desire, and given to Mr. Mathews. Mr. Sheridan grumbled with Mr. Wroughton's performance when the play ended as much as he had done at that of Mr. Mathews. Notwithstanding this vexation, all went on smoothly when it was over; and Mr. Sheridan, in every instance but where the feelings of authorship misled him, was a great admirer of Mr. Mathews, and courted his society to the end of his life.

It was not to be expected that Mr. Mathews could be constantly employed at Drury-lane, for Mr. Suett still lived, and Mr. Bannister engrossed almost every character that was suitable for the young actor. He was content to wait "his hour," and good-humouredly did his best with the worst that was offered to him. A new comedy, written by Miss Chambers, called "The School for Friends," was about this time put in rehearsal, and at length advertised for a certain night, but had been postponed from time to time on account of Mr. Bannister's protracted indisposition, who, from increased illness, at the eleventh hour failed them. Mr. Mathews was requested to study the part (a very long one) thus resigned by Mr. Bannister, and, to the surprise of the manager, undertook to be ready by the following evening, for which purpose he remained up all night, and went the next morning to his single rehearsal perfect to a letter. The surprise of everybody was great, for he could not even be suspected of knowing anything of the play, not having seen any part of it till his task was given to him.*

Mr. Mathews's study was always remarkably quick, and, contrary to the general result in such cases, his retention of what he had learnt was as remarkable as his rapidity in acquiring it. I have known him, without referring to the book, perform a character which he had neither acted nor read for fifteen years.

On one occasion he undertook, at the English Opera-house, to perform his previous entertainments successively during the season. One night, not having looked at the bill, he totally

* *Matthew Daw* was a Quaker, and his performance of the character was a great favourite with the town throughout the run of the play.

forgot, at the very instant he was about to commence at the table, what he had advertised himself for that night, and, after a moment's embarrassment, he left the stage in order to ascertain which of his performances he was expected to deliver. Having inquired, he immediately returned, and proceeded without the slightest difficulty to the end.

In his "At Homes," although they were partially derived from his own observations, yet not only the links to the characters, but certain matters supplied by his authors from their own fancy, required much study; yet, during the sixteen years that he presented himself in successive seasons at that table, he never had a prompter, nor ever once took with him to the theatre a single memorandum or note of the night's entertainment. Even while acting in the regular drama he could never bear to be prompted, and any attempt to do so would have increased his embarrassment had he been imperfect. I remember an instance in proof of this. Early in his London engagement at the Haymarket he had to perform *Caleb Quotem*, in "The Wags of Windsor." On his first appearance on the stage, instead of the usual address, he bowed to Mr. Farley, who performed *Captain Beaugard*, and, after a minute's pause, said to him, "My name, sir, is *Lingo*." Mr. Farley, quite thrown off his guard by this extraordinary lapse in the actor's memory, exclaimed quickly, "The devil it is!" The audience laughed, and Mr. Mathews was in his turn puzzled. The prompter and the performers endeavoured to convey the right speech; but they tried in vain to "give him the word," as it is called. He could not profit by their efforts, and was altogether at a loss. At length his own recollection returned, and he proceeded with his usual volubility and correctness. As Mr. Mathews never was in the most trifling degree addicted to the poisoned cup, this was remarkable. He could never account for it, for he was not at all in a nervous state, and this was the only occasion upon which such an accident occurred during his professional life.

He never performed his "At Homes" so well when I was present, from the fact of my being acquainted in a general way with the matter he was delivering. It made him nervous to see anybody listening to him who had the power to correct a mistake.

In the October of this year Mr. Mathews again came forward as a substitute for Mr. Collins,* who was taken suddenly ill;

* A very clever actor, who died early. He was the original *Mock Duke*, in "The Honeymoon," and previously, *Timothy Quaint*, in "The Soldier's Daughter."

and the part of *Robin*, in "The Prior Claim," was announced to the audience to have been "undertaken by Mr. Mathews from four o'clock the same afternoon, with his usual alacrity."

All this, however, was wearing away his first hopes: and at length he became weary with waiting only to take the place of the sick, or for "dead men's shoes." Suett's would have fitted him, but in the meantime he went barefoot, and sorely gravelled he was in consequence. He looked forward, however, to the time when "the dear little Haymarket" would once more open its merry doors, and there at least he had a set-off to the annoyance of being put in the background at Drury.

During our first or second year in London we met Mr. Thomas Moore, for the first time, at the house of Mr. Raymond the actor. Mr. Mathews was in high spirits, and, being charmed with Mr. Moore, did all he could to render himself agreeable, in return for the pleasure he received. He was, in fact (to use a phrase he employed upon such occasions), "upon his mettle" before such a man; and Mr. Raymond, who dexterously drew him forth to great advantage, was so struck with his power and imagination in some of his representations, that the next day he came to him with a project which he had formed after his guest's departure, suggested, he said, by the discovery of the very peculiar talent Mr. Mathews had displayed. Mr. Raymond then proposed to commence book-auctioneer, as far as capital went, and that Mr. Mathews should sell the works. In the event of his consenting to the proposal, Mr. Raymond pledged himself to pay him 500*l.* annually; or, if he preferred it, to give him an equal share in the profits arising from each sale.

So sanguine, indeed, was the projector of this singular speculation, that, I believe, had Mr. Mathews encouraged it, Mr. Raymond would have doubled the temptation. My husband, I remember, urged as one of his scruples, that the moment he should be required to stand up alone before a crowd, "the observed of all observers," his confidence and powers would utterly forsake him. Little then did he anticipate with what effect he should one day, "singly and alone," confront thousands of spectators, and chain them together for hours by the force of his extraordinary genius.

After this proposal, a sale of some of Mr. King's stage "properties," as they are called—namely, his Lord Ogleby's snuff-boxes and cane, with other dramatic valuables, was proposed in the theatre amongst the performers, for the benefit of his widow, when Mr. Mathews, in jest, proposed to become the auctioneer,

and to sell them upon the stage to his brethren. This jest was turned into earnest by his being unanimously elected to the post. The chair belonging to *Careless*, in "The School for Scandal," was dragged forth, and the auctioneer *pro tem.* disposed of the articles on terms far exceeding the expected sum, and with such effect upon all present, that again poor Mr. Raymond's "soul was in arms, and eager for the" *sale*. Again he was denied. It was not to be.

CHAPTER XII.

Mr. Theodore Hook's farce of "Catch him who can"—Letter from Mr. Colman to Mr. Mathews—Ventriloquy—Letter from Mr. Young to Mr. Mathews—Mr. Mathews meets with a severe accident—His re-appearance at Drury-lane Theatre—Mr. Mathews's first attempt to perform an "Entertainment"—Mr. James Smith and his letter—Albinia, Countess of Buckinghamshire—Mr. Abraham Goldsmidt—Mr. Mathews's introduction to the Prince of Wales—The actors' dinner to Mr. Sheridan—Mr. Theodore Hook's extemporaneous singing—Letters from Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Colman to Mr. Mathews—"Twig Hall"—Mr. Liston—Miss Mellon (afterwards Duchess of St. Alban's).

In the course of this or the following season, the farce of "Catch him who can," written by Mr. Theodore Hook, for the purpose of bringing in juxtaposition the talents of Mr. Liston and Mr. Mathews, was produced at the Haymarket Theatre with success.

By the following letter it will be seen that Mr. Mathews continued on good terms with the manager of the Haymarket Theatre, as well as with the public. I cannot remember on what occasion he first ventured his ventriloquy before a London audience (probably on his own benefit night), but it is evident that it was a successful effort, and considered attractive to the theatre.

26th August, 1806.

My dear Mathews,—I am dreadfully gravelled on this conclusion of the season for want of new matter; and, as it is occasioned in some measure from the dulness of my own muse (which has shirked me in my efforts to finish my farce), I feel that I owe the more to my partners to do all that can be done during the remainder of our term. Will you, under these circumstances, repeat your ventriloquy on Saturday? As I am thrown out of the intended play, it will be of service.

Truly yours, G. Colman.

To Charles Mathews, Esq.

Anxious as my husband had long been to get his friend Mr. Young once more side by side with him, he was nevertheless

thwarted in all his hopes. Mr. Young married, soon after we left him at Liverpool, a lovely, amiable, and accomplished creature (Miss Julia Grimani). This lady died ten months after their union, leaving a newly-born infant, at once to point out to her husband the cause of his sorrow, and, after a time, to prove an alleviation to it. At length we had the pleasure of perceiving that our friend had so far regained his natural buoyancy as to feel once more a lively interest in his profession, and to look upon his child's welfare as a source of future consolation.

Soon after this, Mr. Young finally came to terms for the ensuing season with Mr. Colman, and made his first appearance in London at the Haymarket Theatre, in "Hamlet," with a success which his subsequent career justified.

During the Drury-lane season of this year, Mr. Mathews met with an accident at a match of pigeon-shooting; an amusement of which he often partook as an excuse, I verily believe, for spending the day out of town; the sport always taking place on Barnet Common, the neighbourhood of his early pleasures and most endeared associations. The accident was thus announced in the newspapers:—

> We are sorry to hear that Mr. Mathews, the actor, has severely suffered by the bursting of a fowling-piece on Friday afternoon, when he was tempted to engage in a match at pigeon-shooting, near Barnet. His left hand has been much injured by this unfortunate accident, and his whole frame has received a very severe shock. A similar accident occurred a few years ago to Mr. Bannister.

He returned home at eleven o'clock at night, with his arm in a sling, and though he was obliged to own that he had hurt his hand during the day's amusement, I was not aware till the next morning, when the surgeon who had attended him immediately after the accident came to dress it, that anything serious had occurred. He would not distress me, and in order that his pallid face might not shock me, he had walked for a short time in the street where we lived, imitating a mail-coach horn; his usual manner of announcing his safe return home after a short absence, if at a time and place where he could do it without being observed.

This accident proved very severe, and he remained under the surgeon's care longer than was at first expected. A new comedy by Mr. Kenney, then in preparation, in which Mr. Mathews was required to perform a principal part, was in consequence postponed. At this time, while he was recovering from his accident, a piece called "The Blind Boy" had made its appearance at

Covent Garden, with great *éclat*, and he felt very desirous of seeing it; but, as there would have been an obvious impropriety in being seen at a public place while he was supposed to be, and was in reality, unable to act (for, although he was quite well in other respects, he was unable yet to take his hand out of a sling), he determined to pay to the pit, believing that in such a dense mass of people he should escape particular notice; and he soon felt satisfied by observing all about him apparently strangers to his person. In fact, he was seated among persons, tradesmen as they seemed, deeply intent upon the object of their visit, and utterly unobservant of anything but the stage. One of these professed total ignorance of all the performers, and threw himself upon a better-informed neighbour for intelligence; so that, whenever a fresh face appeared, he applied for information. "Who is that?" he would say; and as surely would he to whom the question was put answer confidently, Mr. ——, or Miss ——, being always wrong in the name he gave. This "learned Theban" was a sort of animal who deemed anything better than to confess himself ignorant upon any point; therefore, he continued to misinform his simple and confiding friend, who was satisfied at the close of the play that he had been gratified by the performance of Mr. Fawcett in *Hamlet*, Mr. Kemble in *Rosencrantz*, Simmonds in the *Ghost*, Cooke in *Polonius*, and Mrs. Siddons as *Ophelia*, &c. All this had fidgeted Mr. Mathews throughout the play very much, and nothing but his desire to remain unnoticed prevented him from setting his neighbour right. At last the afterpiece began, and he was obliged to hear Miss De Camp, in the *Boy*, called Charles Kemble; Miss Norton, Mrs. Davenport; Fawcett, Emery; and Liston, Dignum; and so on. This, too, he bore; but at last he was touched to the quick by hearing his own name given to some subordinate person in the theatre; and in an evil moment he observed with annoyance, pretty visible to his neighbour, "No, no, sir, not Mathews, that is Mr. ——." The man turned short round at this correction, somewhat impatiently, and looked his corrector in the face, as if with an intention of out-facing his assertion; but in a moment his sternness relaxed—his pertinacity vanished—his compressed lips distended into a smile of awakened recollection, and with a significant blink of his eye he said, "Why, you are Mathews! I knowed you the moment you spoke, by your wry mouth!" Indeed, it soon became difficult for him to move anywhere without being recognised. In proportion as he became known, his natural shyness increased,

and his dislike of being noticed in public out of his profession, or by strangers, was always a serious drawback to his enjoyment.

In the course of this winter, 1808, Mr. Mathews conceived the idea of performing "An Entertainment;" yet, doubting the possibility of one pair of lungs being able to furnish strength sufficient for three consecutive hours' exertion, "the occasional assistance of Mrs. Mathews in the vocal department" was called in as a make-weight; and, as the entertainment was only intended to be represented in Yorkshire, where I had been always received with partiality, such an auxiliary was not altogether insignificant to the end desired.

Our friend Mr. James Smith kindly undertook to write some songs suitable to Mr. Mathews's peculiar powers, and to link together certain descriptions, which he had heard him give, of eccentric characters, manners, and ventriloquy. So excellent was the whole that it proved brilliantly successful, and this first effort of actor and author, after ten years, became the foundation of that extraordinary series of "At Homes" upon which my husband's great professional reputation was perfected. Amongst the songs, "The Mail Coach" and "Bartholomew Fair," which Mr. Mathews afterwards sung till all playgoers were familiar with them, were the most popular; and, though introduced so long ago and on every possible occasion, they were as full of point and attraction in the year 1818 as if then heard for the first time.

As this entertainment was so important in my husband's theatrical career, I will annex the first bill ever published of "The Mail Coach Adventures."

By permission of the Right Worshipful the Mayor.
Theatre Royal, Hull.

On Wednesday evening, April 12th, 1808, Mr. and Mrs. Mathews, of the Theatre Royal, Drury-lane. Mr. Mathews (with the occasional assistance of Mrs. Mathews in the vocal department) will exhibit an entire "New Entertainment," consisting of recitations, songs, imitations, ventriloquy, &c., entitled

"THE MAIL COACH; OR, RAMBLES IN YORKSHIRE."

PART FIRST.—Recitation: Introductory address; general improvement in the conveyance of live lumber, as exemplified in the progress of heavy coach, light coach, and mail; whimsical description of an expedition to Brentford. Song: "Mail Coach." Recitation: Description of the Passengers, lisping lady, Frenchman and critic in

black. Song: "Twenty-four Lord Mayors' Shows." Recitation: Breaking of a spring; passengers at Highgate; the literary butcher, Socrates in the shambles; learning better than house or land. Song: "William and Jonathan." Recitation: Definition of "Les Belles Lettres;" French poets; rhyming defended. Song: Cobbler à la Françoise." Theatrical criticism: Dimensions of Drury-lane stage; critic put to flight by two puns; imitation of an election orator; scramble at supper, drunken farmer; cross readings. Song: "Lodgings for Single Gentlemen." Recitation: Wandering patentee; Mrs. Mathews's introductory address. Song: "Mrs. Mathews." Recitation: Dialogue; Mrs. M. and Nicky Numskull; duett; harmony and discord (from Music Mad). Song: "The Yorkshire Beauty, or the Misfortune of being handsome."

Between the first and second parts, Shield's celebrated song of "Heigho," by Mrs. Mathews.

Part Second.—Recitation: Digression on the study of the law; whimsical trial; Goody Grim versus Lapstone; cross-examination of a pig. Song: "The Assizes." Recitation: Quaker's tour to Gretna; imitation of an idiot catching a fly. Song: Mrs. Mathews, "Poor Idiot Boy." Recitation and song: "Gamut and Quashee, or Pantomime better than Speech." Recitation: Justice deaf; imitation of "Fond Barney;" highway robberies; Quaker's precaution; Capt. Mac Jumble from Tipperary, his history. Song: "Whiskey and Gunpowder." Ventriloquy, or Little Tommy. Song: Mrs. M. "The Tuneful Lark." Recitation: Mac Jumble's Amours; Quakers overtaken; ostler's soliloquy. Song: "The Exciseman." Recitation: A bull; mountebank's harangue. Song: "Quack Doctor." Recitation: A French Irishman; unexpected discovery; a battle; spider and spy; description of a fair; Mr. Punch; Yorkshire giant; wild-beast man. Song: "Bartholomew Fair." Recitation: Bull the second; York Minster; arrival at York; journey ends. Imitations of some of the principal London performers:—Mr. Kemble, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Bannister, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Cooke, Mr. Fawcett, Mr. Incledon, Mr. King, Mr. Munden, Mr. Blanchard, Mr. Braham, and the late Mr. Suett. Concluding Address.

How deeply indebted my husband considered himself to Mr. Smith for connecting and applying in so masterly a manner the matter which was before him, and for the humorous songs, written so admirably to display the original powers of the singer, may be imagined. "The Mail Coach" and "Bartholomew Fair" were the first of their class, and might be said, like the two bags of gold, to be the fruitful parents of many more, well known to the public as belonging peculiarly to Mr. Mathews.

For this invaluable service Mr. Smith declined anything like payment, and would at length only allow my husband to present him with some trivial remembrance. Mr. Smith's acknowledg-

ment of this trifle offers so agreeable an evidence of his liberal feelings, and his friendship for my husband, that I cannot resist inserting it here.

Basinghall-street, July 8th, 1808.

Many thanks, my dear sir, for your present. Your kindness has caused you to overrate my poor abilities; though you do no more than justice to the alacrity with which I endeavoured to serve one for whose private worth and professional talents I entertain so high an esteem. I barely supplied the outline, your imitative skill supplied the colouring and finish.

Had I leisure for the undertaking, I certainly should endeavour to exhibit your powers in a more dramatic form, and transplant my weak pen from the lecture-room to the stage; but other avocations prevent such an attempt.

It is rather a novel case, that the "pursuit of the law" should save a man from damnation.

With best compliments to Mrs. Mathews, believe me,

Dear sir, very truly yours, JAMES SMITH.

To Charles Mathews, Esq.

At this early period Mr. Mathews's peculiar powers in private life were talked of, and he was sought by all party-giving ladies and lion-providers. Innumerable were the applications "to know Mr. Mathews's terms for an evening," and to beg his company, every one of which drew from him a refusal to visit the person so applying on any terms.

Albinia, Countess of Buckinghamshire, was one of his admirers, who almost persecuted him, and he tried all possible means to check her wish to lionize him on all occasions. In so many unpleasant situations, indeed, did she place him, that at last he determined to decline the next invitation, and wrote a note excusing himself on the plea that his health did not admit of any exertion out of his profession. Lady Buckinghamshire was, as he expected, much offended, and in a neat equivoque made him understand that she was not deceived by his excuse. Her reply was briefly—"Lady Buckinghamshire's compliments to Mr. Mathews, and is very sorry to find him so indifferent."

About this period Mr. Mathews first saw the Prince of Wales at a fête given to his Royal Highness by Mr. Abraham Goldsmidt, at Merton. My husband at first hesitated to accept the invitation, and for some time balanced between his desire to meet the great personage he much wished to see, and the fear that he might be asked for the purpose, when there, of contributing towards his entertainment. He consulted Mr. Braham, who removed his fears, telling him that he believed Mr. Goldsmidt

invited him because he had met him at his brother's, Mr. Benjamin Goldsmidt (to whose family Mr. Mathews was much attached), and out of respect to his private as well as professional character. The invitation was therefore accepted, and no indication was given of any such design as my husband had at first suspected. At supper he managed to sit next to Mr. Braham at a table remote from that at which the Prince sat, and where several of his familiar friends were also assembled. All apprehensions of any annoyance having long before subsided, he was cheerfully enjoying himself with his friends, when he felt a tap upon his shoulder, and received the next moment an intimation in the following form from his host: "Mr. Mathews, you must go with me to the other table; the Prince wants you." To this curious mode of address my husband replied, "Impossible, Mr. Goldsmidt; I cannot think of going." "But," added his host, "he has asked for you; you must go," meaning to say, "etiquette requires you to obey the command of royalty." Poor Mr. Mathews sickened at the thought, and appealed to Braham, who gravely filled up the measure of his discontent by coolly replying, "You must go." Accordingly, away he went with his host, who left him near the table where the royal guest was seated. He was hesitating what to do (for there was no vacant seat), when Mr. Goldsmidt rejoined him, and with less delicacy than eagerness to gratify his Royal Highness, called out aloud, "Mr. Mathews, Mr. Mathews, stand opposite the Prince—stand opposite; the Prince wants to look at you!" His Royal Highness seemed quite shocked at this rather coarse version of his desire, and did not at the moment forget that he was England's gentleman, for, with a hurried and even embarrassed manner, he said, as he bent forward across the table, "I am very happy to be introduced to you, Mr. Mathews, but there's no seat on that side." The Prince then turned to Mr. Sheridan, who was next him, and said, "Sheridan, can't we make a seat for Mathews between us?" at the same time contracting his own and making a space, he pressed my husband between himself and Mr. Sheridan. This was an instance of good-hearted politeness to the person he had been the means of distressing which endeared him to Mr. Mathews ever after. The Prince soon drew him out in many things, of which he professed to have heard a great deal, and which Mr. Mathews could not have attempted before him under less judicious and delicate influence, and the rest of the evening proved very gratifying to the actor.

It was about this period that my husband first became inti-

mate with Mr. Theodore Hook.* The election for Westminster had recently taken place, and Mr. Sheridan was chosen one of its representatives, on which occasion the actors of Drury-lane celebrated their proprietor's triumph by giving him a dinner

* Theodore Edward Hook, novelist, political essayist, and, with perhaps the single exception of Douglas Jerrold, the greatest conversational wit of the century, was born on 22nd September, 1788, and educated at Harrow at the same time as Lord Byron. At the age of sixteen he commenced writing for the stage, and with almost unvarying success. His wondrous powers of repartee and judicious play upon words—above all, his gift of improvising verses and constructing rhymes on the most out-of-the-way words and on the names of the best-known people, caused him to become a welcome guest in the best society of the day. Campbell the poet spoke of him as "a wonderful creature," Coleridge declared him to be "as true a genius as Dante," and at last he was brought under the notice of the Prince Regent, who was so charmed with his comic singing and extempore verse-making, as to procure him the situation of Accountant-General and Treasurer of the Mauritius, with a salary of 2000*l.* a year. At the Mauritius he remained five years, living in the gayest and most extravagant manner, but at the end of that period a scrutiny of the public accounts was made by a committee of inquiry, and gross defalcations were discovered in the treasurer's books. The deficit was for a very large amount, and as Mr. Hook was responsible, he was arrested and shipped off to England. On his arrival, the accounts were examined, and the late treasurer was declared by the Board of Credit to be liable for 9000*l.*, an amount which he of course had not the means of paying, and he was accordingly lodged in the King's Bench, where he remained for two years. In March, 1825, Mr. Hook was set at liberty, but informed that he was "in no degree exonerated from his liability to the debt, if he should hereafter have the means of discharging it." Upon his arrival in England he recommenced dramatic writing, and began to contribute to newspapers and magazines. In the year 1820 he established the *John Bull*, and in a few weeks, by the combined force of great talent and unblushing effrontery and personality, he rendered it the great organ of George the Fourth and the Tories, and the terror of Queen Caroline and the Whigs. In the year 1824 he commenced his career as a novelist by the publication of "Sayings and Doings," to which were added in successive years "Maxwell," "The Parson's Daughter," "Love and Pride," "Gilbert Gurney," "Gurney Married," "Jack Brag," "Births, Deaths, and Marriages," and "Father and Son." Some of these were originally published in the "New Monthly Magazine," of which periodical he became editor in 1830.

From the time of his liberation in 1825, until his death in 1841, his life was one round of dissipation, high living, and hard work. Courted, flattered, and demanded in the highest and best society, loving admiration like a girl, and doting on pleasure and mischief like a boy, he was compelled to keep up his literary engagements as a means of subsistence. After a night passed in feasting, gambling, and debauchery, he would steal two or three hours from his fevered sleep to dash off a certain number of pages for his novel, or a certain number of articles for his newspaper, and then again plunge into the thousand insanities and vices of the society in which he lived. And these were not exceptional cases—this was his regular life: from the time of his leaving prison until his death he knew no other. Of course his writings under such

at the Piazza Coffee-house. To this dinner Mr. Hook was invited.

In the course of the day many persons sung, and Mr. Hook being in turn solicited, displayed to the delight and surprise of all present, his wondrous talent in extemporaneous singing. The company was numerous, and generally strangers to Mr. Hook; but without a moment's premeditation, he composed a verse upon every person in the room, full of the most pointed wit, and with the truest rhymes, unhesitatingly gathering into his subject, as he rapidly proceeded, in addition to what had passed during the dinner, every trivial incident of the moment. Every action was turned to account; every circumstance, the look, the gesture, or any other accidental effects, served as occasion for more wit; and even the singer's ignorance of the names and condition of many of the party, seemed to give greater

circumstances were no criterion of his natural powers, for the mere *vis vitæ* had to be sustained by constant draughts of champagne and brandy, and the next morning's reaction was fatal to any effort of the brain, but the potations served to re-kindle the brilliancy of his spoken wit and his conversational vivacity, which were unapproachable to the last.

On the 24th of August, 1841, Hook died, bankrupt in purse, broken down in health, a premature old man, with a most brilliant circle of acquaintances, but without one real friend. His effects sold for 2500*l.*, which sum was immediately claimed by Government, and a subscription was set on foot for his illegitimate children and their mother. The subscription amounted to nearly 3000*l.*, of which the late King of Hanover, to his credit, gave 500*l.*

So lived and so died one of the most originally-gifted geniuses of his day, and as we regret to confess, one of the meanest characters that time has ever produced. Scrupulous, dishonest, timeserving, a bully to the poor and a flunkey to the rich, lacking the principle either to pay his creditors or to marry his victim, lacking the courage to take up his position as a man of letters on the strength of his talent, and content to fritter his days away as a buffoon to the aristocracy, this gifted man went to the grave unhonoured, unmourned, uncared for. His novels are even now seldom read, his *bons mots* are even now forgotten or fathered upon others, and by the succeeding generation his name will scarcely be known. He was perhaps the most daring practical joker that ever existed, and his successes in this way are embodied in the pages of "Gilbert Gurney." Of his jests it will be sufficient to quote two examples. One occurred after a "swell" dinner-party, when the company were dispersing. "Have you lost your hat, Hook?" asked the Duke of Rutland, seeing Theodore engaged in a fruitless search. "I have," replied the punster; "but had I such a Belvoir as your grace, depend upon it I'd take better care of it." The other was delivered at my own christening, at which ceremony Hook was present. "What are you going to call the boy, Fred?" asked he. "Edmund Hodgson," replied my father, "after his godfathers, you know, the Hon. Edmund Byng, and Hodgson, the Pale Ale brewer." "After them!" retorted Hook; "then you had much better christen him *Byngo Stingo!*"—E. Y.

facility to his brilliant hits than even acquaintance with them might have furnished. Mr. Sheridan was astonished at his extraordinary faculty, and declared that he could not have imagined such power possible, had he not witnessed it. No description, he said, could have convinced him of so peculiar an instance of genius, and he protested that he should not have believed it to have been an unstudied effort, had he not seen proof that no anticipation could have been formed of what might arise to furnish matter and opportunities for the exercise of this rare talent.

It was a bright day altogether, upon which Sheridan himself, however, shed but little light. He made a speech, which was not remarkable for any of that brilliancy which he was wont to strike out in oratory. In fact, he was seldom agreeable in the presence of actors; before them his cheerfulness and mirth (if they existed at the period to which I allude) never appeared. He always entered his own theatre as if stealthily and unwillingly; and his appearance amongst his performers never failed to act like a dark cloud, casting a shade for the time over all the gaiety of the green-room—a place generally so delightful to all who entered it, Mr. Sheridan's coming "displaced the mirth, broke the good meeting" of the time, and the actors might aptly have applied to him a passage from his own admirable "School for Scandal," and exclaimed as he entered, "Oh, here comes Sir Peter to spoil our pleasantry:" for he was on these occasions almost morose. I perfectly well remember one particular evening, when Miss De Camp, after a somewhat animated colloquy with him, closed it by telling him, "that the performers were all very happy before he entered the room, and that he never came but to make everybody uncomfortable."

Mr. Sheridan certainly was not in his element there, although himself the son of an actor. Not only in this place, however, but elsewhere in his later years, this great man gave sad evidence of a decrease in social enjoyment. He drank, even where ladies were present, inordinately at table.* I recollect once sitting next to him at a dinner-party, and his frequently talking to me

* Sir Walter Scott, in his Diary (published since the above was written, in Mr. Lockhart's life of that great man), made the following memorandum, in reference to this subject, after a visit of my husband to Abbotsford. "Mathews assures me that Sheridan was generally very dull in society, and sat sullen and silent, swallowing glass after glass, rather a hindrance than a help; but there was a time when he broke out with a resumption of what had been going on, done with great force, and generally attacking some person in the company, and some opinions which he had expressed.

in the course of it (knowing me perfectly well), and soon after the cloth was removed, my husband having said something which called forth general mirth, Mr. Sheridan asked me whether I "had ever before been in company with Mathews; if not, that I had a great treat to come!" He was in fact very fond of my husband, and courted his society often, both at his own table and elsewhere. At these times the most mirthful feeling he ever exhibited seemed to be elicited by Mr. Mathews's efforts; for Mr. Sheridan, like all men of great genius, had a full measure of respect and admiration for that which he discovered in others; but it appeared that his fine spirit had so far lost its buoyancy, that it was no longer able to keep itself up against younger and fresher minds. Nay, even with men of his own age, his wit could not compete with superior animal spirits. Mr. Colman perfectly broke him down by the force of his vivacity. Sheridan had no chance with him in repartee, and he always gave up to his little merry companion, after the first attempt, in which he generally failed. His genius seemed to forsake him for the time, and Mr. Colman's fire appeared to blaze the brighter for being kindled upon the embers of the splendid ruin before him.* He always felt his own advantage, and was more brilliant as he found the other more dull. Mr. Colman's joyousness was not met, even at the time my husband first knew these great men, with corresponding feeling: Sheridan's fire, though not his wit, was evidently burnt out; while that of his charming contemporary proved inextinguishable to his last hour.

Mr. Sheridan, in these his latter years, seemed tacitly to admit his absence of power to keep up with such men, and to feel that depression which precluded him from doing himself justice amongst more alert minds, though always ready to do honour to any excellence he met with. He was fond of promoting any occasion for mirth, by the talents and exertions of others, and many intimations were received by Mr. Mathews from him, when any plot for a petite comedy entered the great dramatist's head, for private amusement.

Sometimes the writing of these little despatches was so wretchedly bad as to render their meaning unintelligible, and to compel my husband to take the notes to his son, Mr. Thomas Sheridan, for translation; and I have now in my possession writings of his containing words that would puzzle the most

* It must be understood that my impressions of Mr. Sheridan relate to the latter part of his life.

ingenious to make out without the context. I remember a droll fact illustrative of this. One night an order of Mr. Sheridan's was stopped at the box-door of Drury-lane Theatre, and pronounced a forgery, because the door-keeper could read it!

November 11th, 1808.

DEAR MATHEWS,

"I 'gin to pull in resolution."

When I talked of holiday Sundays, I felt bolder than, upon reflection, I ought to do, with a due respect to the regulations of our college,* into which I have more particularly inquired since we met. So another day, in the course of the month, I will, if you please, attend you, and be kind enough to look out for a moon for me, for I incline to the party of the Lunatics, and am no follower of the Prince of Darkness, on the King's highway.

So, Sheridan and Hood for ever! No Paull! God save the King! Bless the crier! Huzza! huzza!

G. COLMAN.

To Charles Mathews, Esq.

A short time previously to the date of the above letter, my husband had taken a pretty rustic cottage, in one of the most retired lanes of Colney Hatch, where he nightly drove me, even after the latest performances at Drury-lane, for the pleasure of enjoying an hour or two the next morning, and the whole of every Sunday, in the air and the neighbourhood so interesting to him. From this spot we often visited his late father's cottage in the rural lane, where also his chapel stood. Mr. Mathews had even a boyish delight, tempered with much tender feeling, in sauntering near this spot, sitting upon the stile opposite to the cottage-gate, and loitering about the scene endeared to him by early recollections. The above intimation from Mr. Colman referred to his first visit to "Twig Hall," so named after its nominal owner, little Charles, who had soon after his birth been named "Twig" by the same sponsor (Mr. Litchfield) who had given his father the early appellation of "Stick." The Twig was slight, and drooped in London air, so that a more healthy climate was absolutely necessary for its support. This little box was, in fact, considered his, and all who came there were but children for the time being, and confessedly and necessarily Twig's playfellows.

Recollection revives many a joyous scene enacted in the nar-

* Mr. Colman was, it was understood, at this time confined within the rules of the Bench for a debt contracted by *his father* to the father of the person who placed him there.

row compass of this tiny place, in which as many delightful associations were formed. There, in rooms hardly bigger than cells, would friends of the rarest talent unbend and revel in rural freedom once a week; and little Twig welcomed his guests, under the conviction that they came to "pay wis him." Amongst these Mr. Liston (or, as Twig called him, for want of better pronunciation, "Misser Lickton) was an especial favourite. One morning after breakfast I missed these two children, and from an upper window discovered the little dot with him of larger growth, earnestly engaged in the game of "hide and seek," the latter running with serious aspect from gooseberry-bush to gooseberry-bush, calling out the misleading whoop! to the urchin, who on each intimation trundled its tiny round figure after the sound. I could not suppress a laugh when I saw the bigger boy as he crouched down, quite unconscious of a witness of his grave amusement, draw out his snuff-box and take a pinch of snuff to heighten his enjoyment. This indulgence gave time and opportunity to his little dupe to reach the spot, with a scream of delighted triumph at the long-sought detection of the hider, who vainly tried to escape from the grasp of the small hand which seized his coat, while his turn was insisted on, and Misser Lickton was commanded to turn away his head from the whereabout of his co-mate in the game until the appointed signal was given.

On the night when Mr. Liston led forward as father the young man whom he had humoured when a child, the "Old and Young Stager" again played together before me; but my smiles on that occasion, unlike those of old, were mingled with tears, for I sat alone, and thought of him who would have witnessed with pride and gratification the triumph of that night, and the general kindness which greeted his son, so much beloved by him. What a multitude of recollections of bygone scenes, and sweet associations, did that scene bring before my mind's eye, as I beheld the object best and dearest to me on earth relinquishing the profession of his choice, and standing forward, untutored, in one of the most arduous nature, even to those who have studied it with care, and practised it from their earliest days; and all this for the sake of his mother!*

* I may here notice, in order to contradict it, a report that has made its way into the several accounts which have appeared respecting my son's entrance upon the stage—namely, that in becoming an actor, he opposed the expressed wish of his father. So far from this being true, he was encouraged to adopt it within the last few years, for his father believed that he

But to return to the cottage. There often might be seen Harriet Mellon—then a youthful, slim, and beautiful creature: she would come, all joy and simplicity, for a day's recreation. How merry and happy she was! perhaps happier than when splendour hedged her in from the enjoyment of simple pleasures, the love of which I believe to have been inherent in her nature. I see her now, returning from a tumble into a neighbouring pond, in the middle of which her horse had unexpectedly chosen to drink. How unaffectedly she protested, when dragged out, that she did not care for the accident, and walked home, though with difficulty, across the common, with her muslin garments saturated with muddy water, and her beautiful hair dripping down her back! How we laughed while we afterwards dragged off the wet clothes from her fine form, half apprehensive for the consequences! Then again, what peals of merriment attended her re-appearance in the borrowed, ill-fitting dress that had been cast upon her, and the uncouth turban that bound her straightened hair, and which she was compelled to wear for the rest of the day! What amusement her figure created! how well she converted by her good humour an almost serious accident into one of general entertainment! How many other drolleries have I seen her enact at various periods, in the same place, my husband the leader of such revels! This little spot was in reality the *sans souci* of our friends, and little Twig the presiding deity of the place, and the epitome of fun and merriment; as such he was allowed perfect liberty for the time. One day he entered the room with his hands full of the sibylline leaves of the nursery—in other words, half a pack of very dirty

possessed the talent to excel in his own particular line; and fearing that the pursuit of architecture was not likely to enrich him for many years, expressed his opinion that Charles might with greater advantage appear in public as an actor. It was the *son* who objected—nay, silenced the arguments of his father, from the devotion he felt to that profession for which he had been educated; and I believe I may assert that this was the *only* occasion upon which his father's wishes were not considered commands by him. Their mutual love, and I may add esteem, admitted of no differences; their affection never knew an hour's interruption, and he would have found it as impossible to his nature to fly in the face of his father's commands after his death, as he proved himself incapable of thwarting them while living. This every person who knew them can testify.

He made his first appearance on the 7th of December, 1835, at the Theatre Royal Olympic, after little more than a fortnight's preparation, in a *petite* comedy of his own, called "The Hunchbacked Lover," and an admirable piece, written for the occasion by Mr. Leman Rede, called "The Old and Young Stager."

cards, which he had abstracted from his maid's drawer, and with which he offered to tell Miss Mellon her fortune. Borrowing the cant and phraseology of the owner of them, he foretold that his favourite would some day be "married"—not to Mr. Coutts, the banker—not to the Duke of St. Alban's—but to a "handsome carpenter."

We ceased our intimacy with Miss Mellon just as she became a rich woman; but in after years we never glanced at each other in public for a moment, that I did not fancy that the Duchess of St. Alban's looked as if she remembered these scenes, and felt that they were very happy. "Twig Hall," in short, was a place not to be forgotten by its visitors. Alas! how few now remain to dwell upon the recollections this mention of it is calculated to renew!

CHAPTER XIII.

"The Spanish Ambassador" and his "Interpreter."

Mr. Mathews's various powers of disguise naturally tempted his friends into a strong desire of witnessing the effects arising from them upon others. We had returned to town, and resided in Great Russell-street; and as our only wooded view was the gate of the British Museum, which faced our windows, my husband took every opportunity of running away from it for a day; and it became a sort of fashion amongst a knot of his male friends to make parties for him to the neighbourhood of London, where good entertainment for man and horse was to be met with. At one period, six or eight of these worthies determined to make a trip of pleasure, partly on a water-excursion. It was at the time when the excitement prevailed about Ferdinand of Spain; and it was suggested and arranged that Mr. Mathews should travel on this occasion as the Spanish Ambassador. His suite therefore disposed themselves in two carriages, "his Excellency" dignifying the foremost till they arrived at Woolwich, the place destined for the first halt. Here Mr. Hill,* one of the party, undertook the office of interpreter, and he speedily whispered to the landlord the rank of the personage he had the honour to entertain under his roof. The intelligence acted like a spark of electricity, communicating its effect to the whole establishment, and setting it all in motion. In the mean time, "his Excellency" sallied forth on foot with his suite, in order to behold the wonders of the place. His appearance in itself was very striking, without the quick-spreading knowledge of his rank. He was dressed in a bright green frock-coat; his bosom, ornamented with a profusion of orders and ribbons of every sort, dazzled the curious eye of the observer. On his head he wore a large cocked

* Mr. Thomas Hill, proprietor of "The Monthly Mirror" (so often alluded to in the early pages of this book), and always the very good friend of my husband.

hat with patriotic devices affixed, such as "Viva Ferdinand!" upon a ribbon of purple ground in golden characters; and "his Excellency" also wore a pair of green spectacles. In the streets of Woolwich he was followed and cheered by all the little boys in the neighbourhood, to whom the condescending Ambassador bowed in amiable humility. He went into shops and bought divers things, speaking volubly the jargon which his interpreter rendered into good English. At last, almost to "his Excellency's" consternation, a communication was made by the higher powers of the place, that whatever the "Spanish Ambassador" deigned to notice would be open to "his Excellency's" inspection the rest of the day, for which purpose the workmen had received orders not to quit the spot at their customary hours of refreshment, but await his commands! This was alarming. It was more than "his Excellency" reckoned upon, and fearful was the thought of detection under such a distinguished mark of attention. However, the Ambassador graciously accepted the proffered exhibition, and viewed all that was to be seen, with due show of surprise and commendation, faithfully interpreted to the comptrollers of the works. When at last this ludicrous scene ended, the Ambassador and his suite returned to take their "ease at their inn," where the preparations were indeed appalling. Every bit of plate that could be got together, not only belonging to the house, but, as they afterwards learned, from the neighbourhood, was displayed in gorgeous array, to grace the visit of so distinguished a guest. The landlord and his family, and his servants, were tricked out in all their best attire to wait upon the great man, whom they were all drawn out to greet upon his return, courtesying and bobbing to him; all of which this high-bred man and illustrious foreigner acknowledged with a grace and condescension that won all hearts. He talked unceasingly, but they could only dwell upon what his interpreter was kind enough to render intelligible. Now and then, indeed, a word of English would gratify their tortured ears—"Goode Englis' pepel!" "Fine houze!" "Tanks!" and such like comfits sweetened their laborious attendance.

I cannot now recount half the absurdities "his Excellency" committed, or that were committed for "his Excellency," whose averred habits differed very strikingly from those of the English. His Interpreter informed the landlord that, amongst other peculiarities, "his Excellency" required every article of use in vast quantities; hundreds of napkins, spoons, forks, plates; in fact, no man that had not lived in Spain could be aware of such

inordinate demands. The first view of his bed-room presented to "his Excellency" an illumination worthy of victory. Numerous wax-lights were placed in various-shaped candlesticks about the chamber, and about twelve dozen towels, piled up upon a table by the side of the washing-stand, for his one night's use. The Ambassador ordered about him in his own language, which was translated according to circumstances by his accomplished follower, whose interpretation sometimes was enough to overset the gravity of any hidalgo, though it was curious to observe that everywhere, when only a solitary advantage was to be obtained, and that advantage reserved for the great man, the Interpreter always felt under the necessity of explaining that "his Excellency" had a taste for inferior things, and preferred what, to an Englishman, was objectionable, particularly in warm weather—namely, very small sleeping-rooms, short and narrow beds, low pillows, &c. Things usually disdained by our higher orders were, in fact, matters of luxury in Spain; consequently, the said Interpreter enjoyed the superior accommodation as a matter of duty which called upon him to appropriate the best of everything to himself. All this added to the amusement of the time, and laid up cause for future mirth.

The next morning the farce was resumed, and the same mockeries repeated. "His Excellency" breakfasted with the same ceremonies and results as at his previous day's dinner, preferring the stale bread and eggs, and resigning the new to his Interpreter, &c. Thus "perked up in a glittering sorrow," he was not sorry, with all his love of "fun," to see preparations for a removal, which at length took place amid a crowd, assembled to see "his Excellency" depart, and which cheered him as he drove off with the greatest enthusiasm.

The water-excursion followed, and a small fishing-smack was hired for the purpose of a sail. The master of it, a simple, illiterate, fresh-water tar, was duly impressed with the honour bestowed on his little craft by the noble freight it carried, and was all deference and delight. The Ambassador, feigning to suppose this little dirty-faced fellow a naval hero, expressed great respect and affection for the noble "British Capitaine," while he directed his Interpreter to inform him that he should boast of his acquaintance to Ferdinand, and predispose the whole of the Spanish nation in his favour. The old man shed tears of gratification at all this, and "his Excellency" would not suffer his favourite the "Capitaine" to move from his side. Refreshments had been carried on board, and amongst these a

can, said to contain a quantity of lamp-oil for "his Excellency's" exclusive drinking. Everything was done to excite surprise in the little master of the boat that could be devised at the moment. One thing I well remember. A piece of an apple had been cut into the form of a candle-end, and a bit of scraped almond completed the deception. The Ambassador, happening to drop his toothpick in a dusky corner of the boat, demanded a light from his Interpreter, who presented him with the above preparation in a luminous state; and "his Excellency," having searched for the toothpick and found it, blew out the candle, and after a minute's pause of hesitation where to place it, put it into his mouth with unconcern, and ate the whole of it! The "Capitaine" looked wonder and disgust at this, and more especially when "his Excellency," expressing a desire for some lamp-oil to wash it down, a glassful of yellow liquid was poured out, supposed to be what he asked for, and he swallowed it apparently with much relish. The master's chest absolutely heaved at this finishing proof of a depraved taste. However, the time came when the Ambassador and suite wished to land at their dining-place, and it was agreed that the master should await to take them back to Woolwich, where the carriages were left, to convey them to town. "His Excellency," however, had had enough of his empty dignity, and hungered for the solid advantages of a common man, of which it was the fancy of his Interpreter to stint him, while he wanted language to assert his rights and wishes. It was accordingly resolved that he should resign his honours, resume his mother-tongue, and leave his title behind him. Doffing his spectacles and medals, and exchanging his green for a blue coat—in fact, becoming himself—he re-entered the boat as a stranger, who desired to be taken to Woolwich; and, as it was understood by the master that his noble patron, the Ambassador, was not to return, he asked leave of the party to admit the gentleman applying. On the voyage back it may be guessed that not much else was talked of on board but the "Spanish Ambassador;" and as the stranger expressed an interest in the particulars of "his Excellency's" trip, the master undertook the relation. This was by far the better part of the whole affair; for the vanity of the poor little man induced such exaggerations of his intimacy and his favour with his noble friend, that my husband was inwardly convulsed while he listened to the account. He described "his Excellency" as a "werry personable man—not what in Hengland we should call 'ansome, but werry personable, and the hatfablest

cretor I ever seed in my life! Why, sir, he treated me more like a brother than anythink else: called me Captain, and promised to mention me kindly in Spain, and offered to interdoos me to King Ferdinand! (But, Lord, I couldn't bear to live with such nasty devils!) What a happetite he had, too! I couldn't live with Spaniards, I'm sure, if they all eat like 'his Excellency.' He made me quite sick, old as I am, with his dirty Spanish ways. Why, if you'll believe me, he swallowed at one draught a whole quart of lamp ile, and eat up a large tally candle at a mouthful! I seed him with my own eyes, or I wouldn't have believed it. I seed it all go down his Spanish throat! I've since been werry much puzzled, though, to think whatever he did vith the vick!"

When the party reached Woolwich, they found their carriages ready to receive them, and, it then being dark, they escaped further notice. But the visit of "the Spanish Ambassador" was not soon forgotten there; and though there was some after-suspicion that the attention of the resident authorities was expended on an impostor, yet the name of "his Excellency's" representative never transpired. A drawing was ordered to be made by the "interpreter," in commemoration of the event, of which my husband had a copy.

In apology, if it need one, for Mr. Mathews's early love of practical joking, hoaxing, &c. (a species of amusement very justly placed in the lowest scale of humour), I think it fair to urge, that at the period these scenes took place he had no other opportunity of exercising his inherent and irrepressible powers of representation! In his profession there had been no scope for their display: he performed only in the regular routine of plays and farces. The drama's laws, then rigid, forbade any mode by which his unique talents could possibly be exhibited; and his spirits were so exuberant, that it seemed a necessity rather than a choice that they should find egress by any mode that presented itself to his imagination. The extravagant acts he practised were, in fact, like so many safety-valves, through which these spirit-fancies escaped, which, if restrained and driven back, might have preyed upon his mind to its injury.

To show that what I here assert is not merely imaginary, I will mention a circumstance that occurred to him many years

ago. He had lived a very vapid, inactive life for some days, at a time when he was predisposed to mirth and mental freedom. He was amongst strangers, people who never made a joke, or were capable of receiving one. They were grave, matter-of-fact folks, and he was afraid to give loose to any of those active exercises of his vivacious imagination which he was wont to throw out in society. All was propriety and dulness. His spirit was pressed down, "cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd;" he never ventured a playful remark, for he was conscious that it would not have been understood. In fact, in the midst of many persons he felt alone, and at last, almost desponding.

One morning this party, all gentlemen, assembled for the purpose of spending the day in an excursion, and were mounted on their horses ready to proceed. My husband's depressed spirits were exhilarated by the beauty of the weather, and the prospect of a day's pleasure (free from the restraint of a room, listening to truisms) in the open air, where he would have uncontrolled power to gaze upon his idol Nature in her most beautiful form. He had not ridden out of the city for some weeks, and was in a state of childish delight and excitement. At this moment his eyes turned upon one of the party, a very little man, who was perched on a very tall horse, and who seemed unusually grave and important. Mr. Mathews looked at him for a moment; and the next knocked him off with a smart blow, and he fell to the ground. The whole party were struck with horror; but no one felt more shocked than he who had committed the outrage. He dismounted, picked up the little victim to his unaccountable freak, declared himself unable to give any motive for the action, but that it was an impulse he could not resist; and afterwards, in relating this extraordinary incident, he declared his conviction that it was a moment of frenzy, induced by the too sudden reaction from previous stagnation of all freedom and amusement.

His intimate acquaintance at this time with a kindred spirit kept alive this desire to astonish others, for his own amusement, longer than it might otherwise have lasted, and gave, perhaps, a new impetus to his fanciful will. The youthful Theodore Hook had a head to devise, and nerve to execute, and lent himself, heart and mind, to every occasion of mirth; and when injury was to be punished, or folly reproved, these "two were a multitude" in furthering the end.

Mr. Hook was a master-spirit in such freaks, as he has since proved in higher aims. He devised many a plan which "astonished the natives" at the time; and the ingenuity of his con-

trivances, and the witty execution of them, were worthy of more important occasions.

I will relate one of Mr. Hook's impromptus in this way. Mr. Mathews was one of a party making an excursion upon the Thames. In the heat of the day "the voyagers" wished for a pleasant landing-place, in order to enjoy in shade and shelter the refreshments which their boat contained. One most inviting spot presented itself, and Theodore proposed it as suitable to their purpose, when his attention was directed to an enormous board, "courteously waving them" off, with a request that parties would not land upon those grounds. Now, had the proprietor of the said grounds been aware of the party that day boating, he would have done wisely to remove his injunction, or re-word it; for it proved as direct an invitation as when a rustic hoyden, at a merry-making, deprecates the kiss her admirer did not think of giving. Parties were requested not to land, and therefore this party would land; and so they did—all of them believing, except their leader and instigator to this tresspass upon private property, that they might enjoy the shade without offence or detection during their repast. But no sooner had they commenced operations than they perceived a little portly gentleman coming at his utmost pace down the slope, evidently very hot with exertion and choler. The more timid of the party were for retreat, but the dauntless Theodore kept his stand. Looking significantly at the others, and pulling my husband to his side, he coolly took out his pocket-book and pencil, and, without seeming to notice the approaching stranger, made memoranda in his book, and observations on the place to his companion. At last, the owner of the grounds coming up to the party, began to denounce this invasion of his premises; but Mr. Hook, carrying it with a high tone, continued his investigation and pencilling, and observed aloud to Mr. Mathews that he thought the canal might, with most propriety, be cut through that shrubbery, and turn directly across the front of the lawn. To be sure, it would be rather near the house, but that could not be helped, and at present he saw no other way of proceeding. The hot, portly little gentleman started, and cooled down, changing complexion from red to pale. "What, sir!" said he, timidly, and even fearfully, "am I to understand that a canal is to pass through these grounds?" Theodore leisurely finished his mem., and then carelessly answered in the affirmative. The little gentleman now altered his first manner to one of great anxiety and civility; asked various questions as to the probabilities,

time, &c.; and Theodore, who often whispered to his "clerk" (my husband), while he pointed about the grounds, condescended to inform the questioner that the conduct of the whole proceeding was given into his hands, and was entirely dependent upon his judgment, direction, and decision. The gentleman now began to bustle about, evidently uneasy, and anxious to conciliate this man of power, who told him that when he had made himself and his clerk masters of the whole scope and capabilities of the land, he and the friends who accompanied him in this anxious business meant to take their refreshment in some commodious part of the ground, to which he supposed there would be no objection. This was not to be allowed by the now truly complaisant little gentleman. "Oh, no, he could not think of letting the party remain out of doors; he begged they would all four do him the pleasure of taking refreshment within. Himself and his family had dined, it was true; but something should be prepared for the party, and he entreated they would not refuse him the pleasure of entertaining them." Accordingly, the intruders followed their hospitable inviter; and while the servants were despatched to provide the best the house contained for these unexpected guests, they were presented in form to the lady of the mansion and her daughters, and the cause of their arrival was explained with significant looks, as much as to say, "Our delights here are gone; but do not betray any anxiety before these men."

Well, the hateful canal business was of course the topic of conversation. Theodore "thought it a pity so to break up a gentleman's shrubbery; but private considerations must necessarily give place to public convenience," &c.; to all which remarks the unlucky owner of the grounds gave a faint assent.

Refreshments in the dining-room were now announced, and the guests proceeded thither, attended obsequiously by their fluttered host; and one by one the ladies of the house, "on hospitable thoughts intent," followed, anxious no doubt to hear the extent of the threatened calamity. All soon became calm; the man of business talked largely of his power and influence with those by whom he was employed; hinted pretty freely that he could turn the canal in any direction he liked; and indeed at last "the hospitality" of his new friend, and "the amiability of his family," so wrought upon the sympathies of this planner of canals, that, after a bottle or two of excellent wine, he declared "it would be shameful to disturb so much comfort and good taste by such a process. Hinting, therefore, that he

should look out for some other way to accomplish the intents of government, he took his leave with his clerk and friends, and with it the hearty liking of the whole family, whose comfort for the time this frolic had upset.

It is curious enough that, some years after, this incident was woven into a French vaudeville, called "Le gastronome sans argent," and was performed by that admirable comedian, Perlet, in Paris, doubtless indirectly communicated by some friend of the boating party to the author of the piece.*

For several years it was an annual custom with Mr. Hook and Mr. Mathews, and other Messieurs (one of whom is now a "potent, grave, and Reverend Signior") fond of a frolic, to go to Croydon Fair, for the purpose of cracking walnuts—and jokes. Innumerable were the diverting tricks played upon those they encountered, and upon each other, by these young and buoyant spirits. In pursuance of the latter portion of their amusement, on one occasion, while strolling through the market, Mr. Hook suddenly proclaimed himself the victim of fraternal cruelty, declaring that his brother (Mr. Mathews), in order to deprive him of his property, was confining him to his side, and otherwise rendering him wretched and dependent, and that he hoped the good people present would not oppose his escape, or attempt to follow him. As he said this, he suddenly sprang away from his party, leaving his unnatural relation in what he hoped would be an awkward dilemma. Brotherly instinct, however, suggested a means of averting popular indignation and satisfying the crowd that his younger brother was in fact a lunatic, although a harmless one; and the rest of the party confirming this statement, Mr. Mathews was allowed quietly to follow the fugitive, whom he and his friends soon discovered concealed at a short distance round a corner, waiting to rejoin them.

After this they repaired to the coffee-room at the inn. Here again the lunatic became very obstreperous, and behaved in a manner so as to justify the severity of his alleged brother, who, after a time, being a little nervous at the extent of his relation's paroxysm, left the room, and was standing at the outer entrance of the hotel, when a hearse trotted up to the door on its return from its melancholy journey. The driver, a little fat man, had just dismounted from the box, in his professional robes—namely, a suit of woe, and eke a broad crape streaming from his hat, and

* This scene, as will be recollected by all novel-readers, was afterwards worked into the admirable "Gilbert Gurney."

hanging down his back. The man looked at my husband for a minute, and smiling with much meaning, addressed him, as he bowed, by his name. "Ah, Mr. Mathews! my last inside passenger died of laughing at you, sir!" My husband, who generally preserved his incognito, was startled by this knowledge of his person, but being withal curious to know the man's meaning, inquired to whom he alluded. He was answered by a significant action over the shoulder of the man, whose thumb jerked at the mournful machine behind him, which still remained at the door.

It appeared, upon further questioning, that the recent occupant of the gloomy vehicle had gone to the theatre one night, to all appearance well; but had laughed so incontinently at Mr. Mathews's acting, as to return home in a state of such exhaustion, that it ended in severe illness, produced, as the medical man averred, from an over-excitement, of which she died! Mr. Mathews, half shocked, half flattered, was glad to forget the part he was said to have had in the death of the poor young lady (who most probably had carried her *billet* with her to the theatre, as few people die of laughing, although many "have thought they should do so"), and eagerly yielded to a suggestion which this man's appearance and recent errand had occasioned. Accordingly, promising him half-a-crown, he engaged him to act a subordinate part in the comedy of "The Reprisal," which Theodore's freak justified his brotherly wish to "get up" for his benefit. This settled, Mr. Mathews returned to the coffee-room, where the young madman was carrying on the joke quietly enough, having, it seemed, enjoyed a lucid interval. But the return of his cruel brother brought on another violent paroxysm, and no expostulation could abate his resistance of all rational control; on the contrary, soothing seemed to increase his violence. At last his brother declared, that if he was not more obedient and resigned, he would resort to stronger measures, and send him back to London in a manner he would not like. This intimation only added to his outrageous behaviour: he was threatened with confinement, and told that a hearse was in waiting to receive him, no other conveyance being attainable; and that he should be placed in that unless he became quiet. This threat produced no amendment, for, of course, it was received as a feint by the incorrigible maniac. However, at last, the elder brother took a cord from his pocket, with which he tied Theodore's hands behind him; who, having no suspicion of the truth, favoured the act, while seeming to resist it. This arrange-

ment being made, at a given signal in stalked the little fat man in black, whip in hand, and streaming hat-band, and with a solemn, grave air, proclaimed, "The hearse is ready, sir." For a moment the unfortunate captive looked at this messenger of woe with distrust. But again recollecting how impossible the reality could be, he tamely allowed himself to be led out of the room, in apparent submission to his brother's arrangement, and proceeded peaceably down the long passage to the inn-door. Here, however, the sight of the hearse, ready to admit him, and the little man holding the door open with his right hand, respectfully dangling his hat and band from the other, gave the lunatic such a shock, that suddenly releasing himself from his keeper's hold, he darted up the street (his hands still bound), with a hue and cry after him, his unfortunate relation and friends following up the pursuit.

Luckily for Theodore, he was tall and slim, with great agility of limb, so that he fairly distanced the hobnails of his pursuers, and sheltering himself amongst some trees at the edge of the town, waited calmly for his friends, who he believed would not carry their barbarity so far as to leave him there long, or suffer the people who had first followed him to remain at the head of the pursuit. In short, as he anticipated, his party "came at last to comfort him;" they unbound his refractory arms, and all had their laugh fairly out at the consternation they had left behind them. After this they dined at another inn, and became rational for the rest of the day.

It had been the custom to go to the theatre of the place on the evenings of these days; and therefore on this particular occasion the custom was not omitted. The play was "The School for Friends," in which, it may be remembered, Mr. Mathews was the original *Matthew Daw*. He was naturally desirous on this occasion that his party should behave with great decorum, as it would have been painful to him to have his humbler brethren of the sock and buskin suppose that he had come with a party "to flout at their solemnities;" and he could hardly expect to be altogether unknown to them. Mr. Hook, however, was not in a mood to be everything his friend wished; besides, he had a blow to return, a debt to pay incurred on his account for man and hearse. He therefore talked loud, laughed during the serious scenes, and wept at the comic ones, &c. At last, my husband, feeling nervous, crept away from his party, and went to the upper box opposite (the only place in which he could find a seat). Here he congratulated himself upon being separated

from the noisy set below, and believed that he was completely out of their ken. Unluckily, the performer of the Quaker (*Matthew Daw*) excited Theodore's risible propensities—not in the sense where laughing is a compliment — when suddenly Hook's eye caught that of Mr. Mathews, who had escaped to what he hoped was security against any implication in his friend's proceedings. Theodore now arose, and standing in the front of the box, bowed with great respect and gravity; addressing the audience and begging their attention to a few words, he said, "Ladies and gentlemen, you are pleased with Mr. ———, the performer of the Quaker, who has hitherto deservedly met with your approval in that character; but I cannot allow you to be ignorant that Mr. Mathews, the original performer of *Matthew Daw*, is now in this theatre. The modesty inseparable from real merit has induced him to conceal himself in a retired situation; but, ladies and gentlemen, if you will look up to the top of the house, on your left hand, you will see him sitting in that corner" (pointing his finger to the exact spot).

What my husband felt at this moment may be imagined. He declared to me that he could not have risen from his seat had he expected to be shot for remaining in it. The effect upon the audience, chiefly clodpoles and market-people, was merely a vacant stare up to the corner to which they were directed, for the name of Mathews was evidently strange to them, and no positive idea was conveyed by the mention of it. One *Matthew Daw* was as good to them as another, and thus it is probable they would have thought that he of Croydon Fair was the best, had an opportunity been given to them of judging of their comparative merits.

There was no end of these instances of frolicking, and Mr. Hook could never resist a temptation to display some of his inexhaustible stock of humour for the entertainment of his companions. I will give another instance.

Mr. Mathews was one day driving him towards Blackheath, and at the approach to Shooter's Hill the merciful owner of the horse wished that he and his friend Theodore should descend from the gig and walk up the steepest part of it. As they were proceeding with this humane intent, a sort of ancient vehicle, called, for want of a more definite character, "a one-horse chaise," upon four wheels, appeared, slowly descending the steep. It was an unusually cumbrous and large-headed carriage, and more remarkable in that day, when smart single-horse carriages had long superseded such lumbering conveyances.

The first notice of the approach of this vehicle was a loud laugh from Theodore, before, however, he was near enough to be heard by the driver. The old and new carriages now approached. The one ascending paused in order to give its horse time to recover his pull; and at this moment Mr. Hook placed himself immediately in front of the large, awkward, yet well-cared-for animal that was sustaining the enormous machine alluded to, and which was occupied by a very old man and woman, coeval as it seemed with their carriage. When they found their modest and inoffensive progress interfered with, they stared in silence at the cause of such impediment. Mr. Hook, with great respect, took off his hat, and bowing to the old lady and gentleman (for such they evidently were), inquired whether it was really their intention to enter London in that carriage? The driver, unwilling to be behindhand in courtesy, politely took off his hat also, and answered that "he certainly was proceeding to London." Mr. Hook, then assuming the tone and language of a man who was unwilling to see his fellow-creatures betrayed into a position that was likely to render them ridiculous, asked earnestly, "whether the driver was aware of the consequences of entering the metropolis in such a conveyance?" apprising him, that such a one had not been seen there for the last century. The old gentleman looked at his wife, amazed and perplexed, but continued silent. His kind adviser, still at the horse's head, again remonstrated against their progress, declaring that the gentleman would repent it if he persevered, and conjured the old lady to influence her husband to turn back. The old people looked at each other again earnestly. The gentleman seemed paralysed with amazement at such an address, when his intrepid adviser, giving a searching look under the hood where the two faces were ensconced, started back with affected surprise, and exclaimed aloud to his companion, who had been silently wondering at the nerve which enabled him to make such an attack, "Now I look again, the man and woman are greater gigs than the buggy! Oh," continued he, addressing the travellers more resolutely, "you really must not proceed. Allow me to turn your nag's head round." He then suited the action to the word, leading Dobbin a short distance up the hill again, who, nothing loth to retrace his way home, struggled upwards, without any obvious attempt from his master to prosecute his first design of proceeding to town. How the old gentleman ultimately settled the matter with himself and his wife was not known, as his saucy director remounted his friend's light conveyance, and could

only look back a brief period, when certainly the headed chaise was slowly following them.

But I must not attempt to set down all I could tell of this extraordinary and always amusing result of leisure and love of "fun," coupled with an excess of animal spirits. I understand Mr. Hook, in riper years, has turned to good account these frolics of his "green and salad days" in his papers of "Gilbert Gurney," which I have never seen in a collected form; but in the numbers I have read I have found one or two of his former drolleries (there ascribed to *Mr. Daly*), and to the masterly hand of the original I refer the curious for a better version of those anecdotes than my poor pen can furnish.

CHAPTER XIV.

Mr. Mathews in *Maw-worm*—Origin of the sermon from the screen, in "The Hypocrite"—The Four-in-hand Club—Farce of "Hit or Miss"—Offer from Mr. Arnold—Re-opening of the Lyceum Theatre—Cottage at Fulham—Proposal from Mr. Elliston—Mr. Mathews's reception at Liverpool.

On the 25th of September, 1809, the Lyceum opened, under the licence of the Lord Chamberlain, and the joint management of Messrs. Arnold and Raymond.* The success was very great, but more confirmed as the season advanced.

All theatrical people and play-goers will remember the great effect produced by the revival on this occasion, after thirty years, of the comedy of "The Hypocrite," and the fine acting which made it so popular and attractive. I am justified in asserting that Mr. Mathews's *Maw-worm* stood next in comic excellence and truth to Mr. Dowton's exquisite performance of *Doctor Cantwell*. The following testimony of the general impression bears out my assertion:

Lyceum Theatre.

Mr. Mathews kept the house in a roar of laughter by his apt management of *Maw-worm*. It was an admirable representation of "Praise God Barebones,"—an exact portraiture of one of those ignorant enthusiasts who lose sight of all good while they are vainly hunting after an ideal perfectibility.

Mrs. Edwin and Mrs. Orger were the *Charlotte* and *Young Lady Lambert*. These two beautiful women and accomplished actresses, by their excellent performance, made the comedy perfect. In order to complete this account of the performance of "The Hypocrite," it may be best to introduce here one of the detached portions of my husband's Autobiography:

At this period spencers came into wear.† To those who may not remember the fashion, it may be necessary to describe this curious

* Mr. Arnold, the son of Doctor Arnold, the musical composer.

† Introduced, I believe, by Lord Spencer for a wager, he having asserted, while commenting on the absurdities of fashion, that if any person of con-

coatee. It was a garment calculated only to guard the upper portion of the person from cold. It buttoned close up to the throat, but extended no further down than the hips, the skirts being entirely omitted, and the lower man necessarily left unguarded; it was, therefore, of course only calculated for pedestrians. It was a lucky fancy for the actors, who profited by the fashion. Bannister made the first hit in "The Prize," when, on being asked where his tailor lived, he replied, "Upon the *skirts* of the town."

The mountebanks of the conventicle took advantage of it also, and made their hits. I once heard one of the unwashed tribe utter an elegant and appropriate sarcasm upon the raging folly. So fleeting is the fame of an actor, that there are but few even of my own acquaintance, and those principally behind the scenes, who are aware that this accidental circumstance gave rise to "the sermon," as it is called, which is now supposed by the unread in the drama to be part and parcel of the play of "The Hypocrite;" and that my excellent friend, Liston, is entirely indebted to me for giving him the hint to perform *Maw-worm*, since made his own, and on which a part of his well-earned fame has been founded. On my secession from the regular drama, in consequence of my unfortunate accident, he took a fancy to this part; but I shall relate the circumstance to which I allude. The play was revived after the destruction of Drury-lane Theatre by fire, at the Lyceum, to which theatre the company were driven in their distress; and "being burnt out from over the way," the business was carried on there—Dowton, *Dr. Cantwell*. It was a complete hit. My early knowledge of the family of the *Maw-worms* gave me an opportunity of depicting with truth, at all events, the tones and manners of such a character. It was highly effective; but as the author, or rather translator, Bickerstaff, has given him only one scene in the play—for the few lines in the last are so trifling that he is almost a cipher—I was discontented with the insignificant situation in the concluding scene, and made bold to try an experiment, directly in the teeth of the advice of my immortal instructor, who says, "Let your clowns say no more than is set down for them." Finding our play firmly established with the public, I concocted a speech or harangue; and cautiously keeping my secret, I quietly retired one night (the third or fourth of its run) from the characters concerned with *Cantwell*, when he boldly declares himself to be a villain, and at his exit suddenly presented myself behind the screen, perched on a table which I had caused to be placed there, and, to the amazement of my brother actors, bawled out, exactly in the tone of dear old daddy Berridge—*

"Stay, ye infatuated wretches! ye know not what ye do! the doctor

dition were to appear in only the upper part of his coat, the whimsical example would be followed.

* This sermon is put down from memory, a blank being left in Mr. Mathews's manuscript where it ought to have been, and Mr. Liston, who has kindly furnished me with it, is in doubt whether he has recollected the whole; but I can answer for that portion given being correct.

is innocent! Touch not a hair of his precious head—do not ruffle a curl of his gracious wig! I repeat, he is innocent! But ye will be the sufferers! *I have one great*—one glorious consola-ation! ye will all go to the devil for what ye are doing! This is my consola-ation; and when it is too late, ye will repent. When ye see me mount and leave ye to your fate, ye will want my aid. Ye will cling to me—ye will try to lay hold of the skirts of my coat; but I will fling ye all, for I will wear a Spencer!"*

So great was the effect at this unexpected address, that it was ever after an indispensable feature; and such was the reputation of our revival of the play in London, that Dowton, Mrs. Edwin, and myself, were engaged to act the three characters at Liverpool. This sermon, as it has since been designated, was of course expected and delivered. Powerful as the effect had been in London, it was tame, compared to the extraordinary sensation it created at Liverpool. I was quite unprepared for such uproarious demonstrations of delight, and at a loss to account for their expression—roars of laughter, cries of bravo, and at length *encore*. This was the first time the speech had been so honoured (though the precedent was followed in London on my return). The repetition of the play was as loudly called for, and the call was frequently obeyed. Upon my leaving the stage (the first night), the proprietor, Mr. Lewis, shook me by the hand, congratulated me on this hit, and said, "What a lucky thought! who put it into your head? where did you hear of him?" "Whom?" said I. "Why, Spencer." "Of Spencer," said I; "why, you don't understand my point. It is an allusion to an ephemeral fashion of twenty-five years back; and you imagined that I was personal?" "Why, of course I did," replied he. "Are you really ignorant, then, of the fact; and is this only a singular coincidence? Perhaps the most popular dissenting preacher ever known in Liverpool is at this moment drawing together the most crowded congregations in the largest chapel in the town, and his name is Spencer; and the regular church-goers thought it a most excellent hit, and have applauded it accordingly." I had never heard of him, and certainly the accidental circumstance was curious. "Never mind," said he; "we shall have as many overflows as Spencer." When my lameness gave me small hopes of return to the stage, Liston expressed to me his wish to act *Maw-worm* in the country, as he was then going a tour, but was surprised, upon reading the part as printed, to find how inefficient it was without the extra aid of my screen harangue, he himself hardly being aware of my being the first interpolator. I then furnished him with the address I had uttered, and which has gained him such notoriety. But I have often smiled bitterly at the evanescent nature of an actor's fame. A short period only was necessary to cause the effect to be forgotten which I certainly had originally produced in that character both in and out of London, and which I had flattered myself would not so soon fail to be remembered, for it certainly was a

* The lines in *italics* are those quoted from the preacher mentioned by Mr. Mathews.

portrait from the life. I have repeatedly been amused since by questions on the subject, such as, "Did you ever see Liston in *Maw-worm?*" and "Of course, you have heard him preach his sermon? I'm told there never was anything but a song *encored* before that speech. Is it true that he was the first that ever thought of it, and that it is not in the play? They say Weston did not introduce it." Others have said, "I believe Liston was the original *Maw-worm.*"

At this period the mania for driving "four-in-hand" was at its *acmé*. A certain number of gentlemen formed themselves into a society, called, in the slang of the day, the "Bang-up Club." The members of it were men of fashion, and generally possessing large fortunes. They had carriages built like stage-coaches, which they drove themselves, and to preclude the suspicion of any sordid motive for so doing, each gentleman allowed his coachman to sit on his left-hand upon the box, with the privilege of witnessing, at his ease, his master's skill in "handling the ribands." These carriages were not "licensed to carry" even one inside, and in order to satisfy everybody upon this point, the blinds were invariably drawn up.

The costume of each gentleman consisted of a bottle-green body-coat, a milk-white double-breasted great-coat reaching to the heels, several large capes, and buttons of mother-of-pearl, as large as crown-pieces; a many-flowered bouquet in a button-hole at the side; upon the head a low-crowned broad-brimmed hat, with a broad riband and buckle, the hair sleeked down under it, coachman-like. On certain days, the members of the "Four-in-hand Club" met at their leader's door, and proceeded with their vehicles to Salthill, or some other agreeable place within a drive, to dine and return at night. Their horses were of the most perfectly beautiful kind that could be purchased.

It was not to be expected that those who catch "the manners living as they rise," could overlook this extraordinary *furore* while it raged, and a farce called "Hit or Miss" was produced from the pen of Mr. Pocock, with a mere outline (as it often happened) for Mr. Mathews to fill up. His character was of course the one that touched upon the peculiarities of the club, and he presented a faithful copy of its dress, using all the slang of that day, which I fear was too often employed at the time by those not "unto the manner born." It was, however, very amusing in itself, and the character of *Dick Cypher* was a faithful copy of a young man of good family (then in the law), who contrived to mix up this jargon with the most gentleman-

like manner and character. He was delighted at Mr. Mathews's representing him in this anonymous way, and furnished him with most of the terms used. It was a fair hit at "the fancy." The members of the club took this "show up" with great good humour. When the piece was in its first attraction, they sometimes invited Mr. Mathews to accompany them in their drives, when in their full costume and cavalcade, and he generally was preferred to a seat on the box, for which the nominal coachman was displaced—nay, they seemed as if they were anxious to prove that his representation of them had not given offence.

Notwithstanding this, it is not improbable that this pointed though inoffensive satire caused a more speedy termination of this extraordinary whim than would otherwise have taken place, and perhaps gave the club an excuse for dropping an expense which even to men of large fortune must have been felt as enormous.

The great feature of the whole of Mr. Mathews's representation, however, was the "Prime Bang-up" song, which remained popular until its point was succeeded by some newer fashion of expression amongst the ingenious inventors of such quaint vocabularies.

The ensuing month brought the following reiterated offer from Mr. Arnold.

To Mr. Mathews.

Sept. 7th, 1810, 31, Golden-square.

Dear Sir,—The Lord Chamberlain having renewed the licence granted last season to Mr. T. Sheridan, myself, and Mr. Greville, for the benefit of the Drury-lane concern, and which was obtained with the consent and approbation of the trustees of that property; I have the pleasure again to offer you and Mrs. Mathews an engagement, and have only delayed repeating that offer until those difficulties were removed which induced you to decline two former invitations, and which I am happy to understand no longer exist.

I am, dear sir, very truly yours, S. J. Arnold.

At the close of the Haymarket, the reopening of the Lyceum found Mr. Mathews there for a time, in pursuance of his original undertaking, and he was rapturously greeted on his reappearance in *Maw-worm*. On this moderately-sized stage, as at the Haymarket, his acting was seen to most advantage; for at this period, perhaps, his manner had not acquired breadth sufficient, or his voice enough power, to fill the vast sphere he appeared in during the former winter seasons; yet, notwithstanding his

growing popularity, he still retained his resolution to quit the present management. To one accustomed to the old *régime*, the new seemed divested of all comfort and distinction; besides which, his circumstances demanded that he should make a bold effort to set himself free from some pecuniary difficulties, which at the beginning of this year had crept over him imperceptibly. These difficulties were occasioned by the somewhat inconsiderate purchase of a cottage, which, in his overweening love for a rural residence, he had prematurely bought of General Bradshaw, in the King's-road, Fulham, although he could not conceal from himself that the first outlay and expense of supporting it must inevitably prevent him from enjoying it except by snatches. To this was added the resignation of one third of his regular income in London, owing to my retirement from the stage at the end of the last Haymarket season—a circumstance which, however desirable as a matter of feeling to us both, was altogether imprudent. Mr. Mathews, it is true, had long meditated taking me from the stage, my unconquerable timidity having always rendered it a painful pursuit to me; and, after the unfortunate fire at Drury-lane Theatre, the new interests and influences which came into play, decided the long-pending question as to my retirement; and I quitted the stage.

When his term at the Lyceum expired, he set off to his several engagements in Liverpool, Ireland, &c., leaving me in a sort of Noah's Ark, which sheltered every bird and beast that he could collect before he went. His benefit at the Lyceum, on the 3rd of June, proved good: on that occasion he performed *Trudge* in "Inkle and Yarico;" a scene from "My Grandmother," in which he played *Dicky Gossip*, after the manner of the late Mr. Suett; and in the afterpiece of "The Critic," the two widely-differing characters of *Puff* and *Sir Fretful Plagiary;* but his receipts, though liberal for a small theatre, were not more than sufficient to liquidate a portion of the claims which an inadequate income too often creates where youth is uncalculating and generous, and when there is little judgment and less experience to direct good principle and honest intention.

As soon as Mr. Mathews's intention of not returning to the Lyceum was announced (that being then the only regular winter theatre), he received divers proposals and applications; amongst them, one from Mr. Elliston, who, after the fire at Drury-lane, had headed a minor establishment of his own.*

* Since distinguished as "Madame Vestris' Royal Olympic Theatre."

To Mr. Charles Mathews.

April 6th, 1811.

DEAR MATHEWS,—I have reconsidered our conversation of Thursday evening, and if you are serious upon the matter as *I* am, the affair may be brought to a speedy decision.

By the period of the close of the Lyceum Theatre, I will have a piece ready, in which your particular powers shall be shown to the best advantage, and I shall require your efforts for a space of six weeks; for which period I will give you 50*l.* per week, and a 100*l.* note for the advantage of your name at a benefit, you giving me all the assistance you may be pleased to make for the advantage of my receipt on that night. I trust this proposal will be as liberal as you can have expected; and if no impediment beyond a pecuniary consideration should arise, I shall be very willing to close the negociation as speedily as possible, that proper preparation may be made for your appearance on the boards of my theatre.

Yours truly, R. W. ELLISTON.

It may be asked why Mr. Mathews, under his circumstances, rejected such obviously liberal terms. The answer simply is, that he did not choose to appear in any except the patent theatres, and in the regular drama, which hitherto he had seen sustained with a reputation which had, it is true, received a shock, but which he believed was not overthrown; and he was too fond of his profession to do anything that he conceived would disgrace a first-rate professor. At the period to which I allude the drama was considered, even by the nobility and the fashionable world, not quite as a matter of indifference. Such being the respect in which the legitimate drama was held by the public, Mr. Mathews felt his own position in it ought to be maintained; and he, therefore, persisted in his scheme of visiting the provinces rather than retrograde in London. Accordingly, in June he acted at Liverpool, where he had not appeared since his first engagement there in the season of 1803, and then as one of the regular company.

On the 21st he commenced this engagement, and his reception was not the less warm, it may be supposed, in consequence of the increased approval of a London audience since his first appearance in that town. Indeed, his matured powers were rapturously acknowledged; and in his many subsequent visits to Liverpool his popularity was to the end unimpaired.

CHAPTER XV.

Actors' lives—Mr. Mathews's letters from Liverpool and Dublin—His first appearance in Ireland, 1794—The Irish *Barber*, &c.

It is a popular error that actors earn their money easily, and that no labour attends their vocation. This mistake has led many an idle, unqualified person into the profession, and afterwards upon the profession, in the way of charity. According to the preceding letter, in a moderate morning's work four hours are occupied in the wear and tear of mental as well as bodily power; and in the evening, from six till twelve the performer's mind and person are again upon the continual stretch of anxiety and fatigue. Ten hours out of the common labourer's term for work are here accounted for, but it often happens that the whole twelve are so occupied; in addition to which, many, after their long day and night of toil and excitement, are under the necessity of stealing hours from requisite repose, in order to acquire matter for future occasion. Little wonder should there be that so few excel, when often there is scarcely time allowed for more than learning the words of their characters. How, then, can study, without which excellence was never attained, or popularity preserved, be expected? It is a common observation of simple people, after witnessing any striking performance of length (and this was often applied to Mr. Mathews's peculiar talent), "I wonder how he remembers it all." They should rather wonder how he found time in the first instance to become acquainted with what his memory afterwards furnished to his hearers. Mr. Mathews's habit, from his earliest professional life, was to sit up all night, and as many nights as he found it requisite, to study for any particular purpose; for he really studied. Can it be a matter, then, of surprise that such fatigue should at last show itself in a complicated form? His life was that of a blacksmith, with this difference, that his mind constantly lifted a hammer as well as his body.

On the 14th of July Mr. Mathews arrived in Dublin, his first visit there since the days of his boyhood and starvation in 1794.

The "London star," assured as he had been for a long time by approving audiences, and confirmed in talent and reputation, felt less exultation at the expectation of his present reception than when first, "elate and gay, he stepped forth to take possession of the world," full of hope, and unsuspicious of the struggles and hardships in store for him. His own letters on this occasion are all I possess relative to his reception and success in Ireland. It is remarkable, that during the whole of his life Mr. Mathews collected, and preserved with the nicest care, all that was published, in the way of criticism, of other principal performers, but never sought or kept anything about himself. The same negligence was shown in his vast collection of engravings. He piqued himself upon possessing every impression extant of every print representing actors and actresses generally, from the days of Shakspeare, but had none of himself but what happened to have been sent as presents from artists or publishers, so that I have to regret that I do not possess several good likenesses, now not easily to be obtained, as well as much matter of interest relating to him.

Here is an interesting letter, written to me shortly after his arrival in Dublin.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Dublin, July 18th, 1811.

I was quite in raptures at the sight of your letters this morning, having been so many days without hearing from you. You are the best of good wives for sending me such a long letter: it was quite a treat. I have delivered the General's letter this morning. I am glad he did not write more, for my only misery already is knowing too many people. I have half a dozen invitations for every day, but I select the quiet domestic parties, if I can. I have renewed my acquaintance with the only persons I knew here in the days of my starvation, and who are now prosperous people, a Mr. and Mrs. H——; he French, she Yorkshire. I went with them yesterday to their country house at Dunleary, four miles from Dublin, in one of the most enchanting spots upon earth. I cut all parties, and dined with them alone. Went three miles to sea in the evening in a boat. Fished: caught whitings, eels, flounders. Incledon and I have no trouble in providing,* for it is impossible to dine at home. At present I am only acting three times a week—pleasant enough, but takes up too much of my time. I expected Incledon and Mrs. Dickons would act together about four nights, instead of which they act the alternate nights—no bad compliment to my attractions. My first night was better than any of theirs, and the best stock night† since the opening in the winter. But here there is

* Mr. Incledon, who had taken up his abode at the same hotel with him.

† Nights that are not "benefits."

nothing but croaking, like Liverpool. "All ruined;"—"hot weather;"—"everybody out of town," and so on. However, there are plenty left to come to the theatre, that I can see. I opened on Tuesday night in *Lord Ogleby* and *Buskin*. The former went as well as I could wish; but in the farce, I can only say, I wish you had been there to witness it. I was in tip-top spirits with my reception, and played my best. The account I gave you of Liverpool was just the different calculation between the warmth of English and Irish. I spoke the line from Rolla—"We want no change!" like Kemble. This was the first signal for row. It is no exaggeration to say, I had five rounds of applause. Then I gave them a touch of Lewis, which was equally noticed; but when I gave them his "whoop!" it touched the proper chord, for it is precisely the noise which they make here in the galleries when they are more than usually pleased. It was immediately echoed in chorus, and at my exit "A clap for Mathyes!" was proposed, and three rounds were given. In the next scene I sung "The Mail-coach." At the end of the first verse I had another round of "whoops!" A universal encore ensued, and it was loudly called for a third time; but they expressed their disapprobation, not by hissing, as in England, but, "No, no!—too much!" I could hardly keep my countenance at the oddity of their noises, whenever I hit them. The whole farce went equally well, and better than ever I saw it before. "Bartlemy Fair" was as great a hit as the other. In short, I never played to such a delightful audience in my life. I received congratulations after it was over from everybody, as if it were a first night in London, and all my future reputation depended on my reception. It is universally agreed that no farce ever went off so well on a first night in Dublin, and also that mine is an unusual hit.

Ever yours, CHARLES MATHEWS.

During Mr. Mathews's first visit to Ireland in 1794, Daly's cruelty-system of not paying the salaries to those whose humble position in the theatre precluded their insisting upon redress, placed him at length in the most unpleasant dilemma imaginable. His very proper reluctance to solicit pecuniary favours from strangers, and his natural pride in rejecting the alternative of applying to his own family, thereby confessing the fallacious attempt he had made to live independently of his father in the profession which he had chosen in opposition to parental wishes, left him in a really distressing situation. He would not confess the starving condition into which his headlong predilection had cast him, which not only shut him out from any appeal to his relations, but from seeking temporary assistance from his friends, whose advice he had equally opposed. Nay, even to those upon the spot, who knew the extent of Daly's avarice (for it was notorious that he did not want the means of paying his per-

formers, since he himself indulged in every luxury), he felt equally unwilling to confess his want of resources. He had become deeply indebted to his landlord, whom he had put off from week to week, as Daly had led him on with hopes of payment, and the man became daily more importunate.

One night, at the close of the performance, the poor, penniless, supperless young man, returning to his lodging, found the door closed against him! His landlord appeared at the window of the first floor, and announced his determination not to let him in, unless he could assure him of immediate payment of his arrears. In vain the poor debtor entreated—in vain he endeavoured to make his creditor relent. He then reminded the man that he held a security for ultimate payment in his whole wardrobe (not altogether despicable), and a fine violin, itself sufficient to indemnify him. These were all offered to be formally delivered over to him, and might be deemed more than equivalent to his claim; but nothing would move the stern creditor, who was so steeled against his young lodger, that nothing less than the current coin of the realm would satisfy him. A change of linen was then entreated, until the next evening gave him power to claim the rest of his property. Even this small boon was resolutely refused, and the window was at length abruptly closed! The poor, houseless, miserable being stood for a time utterly incapable of thought. At length it occurred to him to seek the wretched abode of the hair-dresser, who daily frizzed and powdered his head. He had a twofold claim upon this man's attention, for his wife was his laundress. When he reached the house he made known his destitute condition, and the poor people listened to his story with every demonstration of kindness. After a moment's whisper with her husband, the wife, "on hospitable cares intent," left the shop where they were standing, and, just as Mr. Mathews had requested leave to stretch himself upon the floor of their small tenement for the night, the poor woman returned, her face smiling with benevolence, and in a tone of exultation informed "the master" that his bed was ready! It was vain for him to refuse. He knew they had but two apartments—the little shop, and the "parlour," which, like a cobbler's stall, served them also "kitchen and hall:"—he would not consent to occupy their only bed. After a long war of kindly words, however, the young comedian was absolutely hustled by husband and wife into their little dormitory, where he saw in one corner a three-legged table, with some "cowld pratees," in their native jackets displayed, a

cupful of salt, and a whiskey-bottle, by way of persuader to this inviting repast; and on the other side of the room stood a narrow, rickety bedstead, let down by hinges from its protecting shell, displaying a patched but clean pillow-case, and a "turnover" of a few inches of linen, which gave similar evidences of cleanliness and industry. Here, after another struggle on all sides for supremacy of generosity, the barber and his wife were the victors. It was, in fact, two to one against the comedian; he found himself overpowered by numbers, and was eventually locked into his bed-chamber by the hand of his hospitable little barber, when he and his wife, doubtless, occupied the space behind the counter—the only one large enough to receive them in a longitudinal position. When the young guest had given way to his melancholy reflections, and sipped moderately a mild dilution of the crathur, he prepared to retire to bed. He found upon his pillow a sort of an apology for a night-shirt. The laundress's experience of "the master's" habits had taught her that such a thing was required by him; and unfortunately, as this visit happened in the evening of the day when all "the master's" linen had been taken home, she had not one of his own to supply him with; therefore a coarse something, resembling what is worn outwardly by waggoners in the provinces of England, was substituted. At first he hesitated to employ it; but reflecting that he must otherwise sleep in the one he had on, and that he must necessarily wear that the next day, his destitution urged him to try on the garment supplied from his host's stock, in which, however it might fall short of what he had been accustomed to wear, he contentedly lay down, first carefully folding and placing his own linen on the bed, fearing that the moveables in the room might not serve as bleaching-machines if he laid it upon any of the chairs. In the midst of his sorrows he at last fell asleep; but towards the morning, which, being in the dark season of the year, he conceived to be "the middle of the night"—that period, so called by the people of late habits, which comes an hour or two before their usual time of rising—he thought he heard the key turn in the lock, as if a stealthy attempt was made to open it. The sleeper was, however, too drowsy to be capable of ascertaining the fact, and he dozed off again, but soon heard another attempt upon the door. He called out, "Who's there?"—the noise ceased. Again he slept; again he was disturbed. At last, after another pause, he was once more startled from his sleep by something cautiously creeping about his small apartment. The certainty that some

person was in the room, and for some secret purpose, was not very agreeable. He remained silent, holding his breath, and waiting the result. At length a hand touched the top of the bed-clothes, and as soon shrunk away, as if alarmed at its own temerity. The young man shuddered. It was impossible, he thought, that the owners of the apartment would think of visiting him in this way. His only conjecture was, that instead of occupying the shop, as he supposed they had done, they had possibly left the house to obtain some better accommodation for the night, and that some intruder had taken advantage of their absence to rob at least, if not murder, their sleeping guest, naturally supposing that he might possess something worth the attempt. He was soon, however, relieved from the most terrible part of his fears by the evident retreat of his untimely visitor, who, as he drew the door of the room after him, whispered in a hoarse, and, as it appeared to the alarmed occupant, a murderous voice, to somebody without, "I've got it!" Got what? asked the trembling comedian of himself, and he stretched out his hand to the chair upon which his coat and nether garments had been laid when he undressed; these were safe. Wondering, therefore, what could have been the object of this secret visit, and keeping watch till day began to look in upon his deplorable state, he sunk into a heavy slumber, from which he did not awake till the day was "well aired." He then perceived his humane gaoler enter, with shaving-pot, powder-bag, and "all appliances and means to boot" for completing a "jintleman's" toilette, as far as head was concerned in that day, who, smiling with a proud and gratified expression, bowed to "the master," and proposed to commence the accustomed operation of the morning, first stifling in their very birth all thanks for the over-night's kindness, and regret at the sacrifice it had occasioned his entertainers. The young man then revealed the terrors of the night to the hair-dresser, who listened to the relation with a somewhat embarrassed, and what seemed to his visitor a suspicious air. He certainly neither attempted to account for the mysterious disturbance of his guest's slumbers, nor to explain how the key had been obtained; but hurriedly proposed that, as it was a cold morning, and the fire and "his honour's" breakfast were not quite ready, his "honour's goodness" would allow him to throw his towel round his "honour's neck," and to dress his "honour's head," as he sat up in bed. This was a very odd sort of request, and was at first resolutely denied; but Pat was so anxiously earnest, that at last "his honour" consented to the

strange importunity of his host, and suffered the operation of having his hair dressed in the position described. The process was somewhat tedious, and "his honour" became impatient. The barber arranged and re-arranged the curls—fidgeted from one side of the bed to the other, when at last the door opened, and in marched, in a triumphant manner, the laundress, with a basket, which, with some parade, she placed upon a chair near the bed, and lo! the dark transaction of the night was elucidated. On explanation, it appeared that some time after the benevolent couple had laid themselves down and taken their "lodging upon the cold ground," it occurred to the good laundress that the "young master" would, according to custom, require a change of linen in the morning, and she repented that this after-thought came too late to enable her to execute her wishes that night. "If she had 'mintioned' it to his honour before he went to sleep she could have washed 'his honour's' linen before the fire went out, and it would have been dry by the morning." Having omitted to do so, she compromised the matter with her conscience by rising earlier than usual, and sending her husband stealthily into "the master's" room in the morning, in order not to disturb him, to take away "the master's eleven shirts short of the dozen," with other washable hangings, that she might present him, as an agreeable surprise, with a set of things in the state she knew his daily comfort required. As the time was brief, and firing dull, these ablutions required more time than she had calculated upon; hence the expedient of the worthy barber, and his contrivance to keep "his honour" longer in bed than usual.

In this friendly shelter the young actor remained until he wrung, by humiliating solicitations, a pound or two out of the cruel grasp of Mr. Daly. He then reclaimed his little property from his unfeeling landlord, and it may be imagined that he repaid in every way in his power the kindness as well as the actual claim of his humble friends. It may be also believed, that in more prosperous times the "great London actor" did not forget the service done to him by these worthy people while he was only one of the most insignificant of "Daly's divarters." On his first increase of income, Mr. Mathews sent a small remittance to his poor little barber, with a promise to repeat it periodically. That promise (which often proved inconvenient) had been faithfully performed up to this time; and as soon as he paid this, his second visit to Ireland, after sixteen years' absence, his first thought was of his generous little friend, to whom he

resolved to give a pleasing surprise in his way. For this purpose, the first night of his arrival, he ordered that on the following morning a breakfast for three might be prepared; at the same time informing Mr. Incledon, who was in the house with him, that he wished him to be present, to be introduced to a very particular and distinguished guest, enjoining the master of the house "to provide an excellent breakfast, for he expected the company of the best friend he had in Dublin." The landlord, impressed with the notion which such a declaration implied, namely, that some great man was expected, of whose friendship the actor was vain, determined at once to obey his order in the spirit in which he conceived it was given; and forthwith, for the credit of his own establishment on so distinguished an occasion, he ordered his best service of china to be set out, and all the plate that could be made available. A message was then sent to the barber, simply to the effect that he was required to operate upon a gentleman's chin (alas! for the craft, powder had ceased to be worn) at a certain hour, at which period Mr. Mathews took care to secure his other guest in the room, and everything but the "hissing urn," which, albeit emitting sounds unmusical to an actor's ear, was requisite for the winding up of the little plot of the present drama. Incledon had somewhat super-adorned his person on this occasion, out of respect to his host's superior guest. At the appointed time the barber was announced to be waiting without for his customer, and the waiter who delivered the message was somewhat surprised to hear himself ordered to admit this person into the breakfast-room immediately. He obeyed; and in a minute after appeared the little man, arrayed in jacket and white apron, and shaving appurtenances in hand, standing respectfully and doubtingly upon the threshold of the door. He was not much altered; for time had but little changed his benevolent features, and Mr. Mathews would have known him had he not been prepared to expect him. It was otherwise with himself; the slim half-starved youth, with narrow, consumptive chest, and pale face, had expanded into the full-grown, healthy man; and his ruddy cheeks and improved appearance were not easily to be recognized without some clue as belonging to the once friendless, depressed creature, who had been beholden to his humble friend's kindness. Pat hesitated, and looking doubtfully first at one "jintleman" and then at the other, whose head was a little averted, inquired respectfully "Which of their honours sent for him?" Incledon at once disowned the necessity for his services; but the other

"jintleman" ran up to the astonished man, hastily relieved him from the shaving utensils, placed them on the table, and in the next minute made himself known to him.

The scene that followed was most interesting, as I have heard it described by Mr. Incledon. The little barber was half mad with gratified feeling. He was desired to sit down and eat the breakfast (to him a dinner), and then to relate how he was situated, whether his wife lived, &c. This he did, after some scruples at such a freedom, and all was told. The breakfast ended, and "the master's" affairs requiring his presence elsewhere, the little barber (whose name I have forgotten) was dismissed, with an assurance that his friend would call the next day upon his wife, and take a peep at his old dormitory.

It may easily be imagined how surprised the landlord of the hotel was; but he was a good-hearted Irishman, and enjoyed the scene (of which the bringing in of the urn had made him a witness), and laughed heartily at his own extra preparations. The barber found an increase to his pension in the next instalment; and he and his wife, like the good children in the story-book, "lived happy ever after." Mr. Mathews was not in the habit of talking of his own good actions; but when a mixture of drollery tempted him to relate any of them, he could not always resist; and he never repeated the scene I have so poorly described without his hearers, after their first laugh, being almost moved to tears.

A few years after this incident, during one of his frequent engagements in Dublin, Mr. Mathews saw his worthy little friend expire in the very bed (though much improved in its appearance) which he had once given up to him, and upon which he blessed him for the last time. It may be believed that the poor widow, who had a half claim upon her husband's pension, felt no diminution of it, but continued to enjoy the advantage entire.

CHAPTER XVI.

Provincial wanderings—Partnership with Mr. Incledon—Dissolution of partnership—Re-appearance at Haymarket Theatre—First appearance of Mr. Mathews at Covent Garden, in "Love, Law, and Physic"—Mr. Mathews's imitation of Lord Ellenborough in the character of *Flexible*—The consequences—Imitation of Mr. Braham—Mr. Mathews's imitation at Carlton House before the Prince Regent—Mrs. Jordan.

For the next twelvemonths Mr. Mathews led a wandering life, appearing at most of the principal provincial theatres in England, and always with the greatest success. In the month of November he joined fortune with Mr. Charles Incledon,* the celebrated singer, with whom he projected what is now called in theatrical parlance a "duologue entertainment," consisting of character impersonations, songs, imitations, &c.; but, though eminently successful, the partners were ill-matched, and the firm was speedily broken up. Mr. Mathews continued acting in the country on his own account, and on the 15th of May, 1812, he returned to London on the occasion of the reopening of the Haymarket Theatre, and was received by the public with the most flattering demonstrations of welcome.

Early in October Mr. Mathews made his first appearance as a regular performer at Covent Garden Theatre,† in the Protean character of *Buskin* in "Killing no Murder," and was most enthusiastically welcomed. It was observed upon this occasion, that "the Bannisters, Caulfields, and Foote, might give you the manner of others with precision, but that Mathews created the matter for the manner, for which he was decidedly incomparable."

* Benjamin Charles Incledon, actor and vocalist, born 1764; originally a common sailor, having served five years in the Royal Navy; pronounced by all who ever heard him to have been the sweetest of English ballad-singers. Died 1826.

† It has been already mentioned that he performed there *once*, for the benefit of Mr. T. Dibdin, in the year 1805, his original part of *Triangle*, in the comedy of "Guilty or Not Guilty."

A farce, called "Sneiderkins," written expressly for him, on account of his extraordinary talent of transformation, was produced soon after Mr. Mathews joined the theatre. In this, as the hero of the piece, his individual exertions were in themselves successful; but the farce was not relished by the audience, and, though not altogether condemned, it died a natural death, being probably withdrawn by Mr. Mathews's advice.

By the end of the same month another new piece, called "Love, Law, and Physic," was produced from the pen of Mr. Kenney, which involved the representative of *Flexible* in some subsequent embarrassment. The most prominent character in the farce was given to Mr. Liston, whose *Lubin Log* must be remembered by all who saw it. Mr. Mathews was not satisfied with his part. It was one of those productions which he so frequently had presented to him "to fill up for himself." A friend wrote him a song, called "The Playhouse," to give weight to his character; besides this, he felt that his own exertions to improve the part were more than usually requisite. In one of his assumptions, he had to give a description of a barrister pleading in court. This, in order to be effective, he thought necessary to do in the style of the public men he had heard, and it produced the expected effect. But when he came to give the judge's charge to the jury, which was an imitation also,* the effect was quite astounding to him, for he had no idea of its being so received. The shout of recognition and enjoyment indeed was so alarming to his nerves, so unlike all former receptions of such efforts, that he repented the attempt in proportion as it was well taken; and a call for it a second time fairly upset him, albeit not unused to loud applause and approbation.

The next day and the next the press was partially occupied in objecting to and in defending the introduction of a subject by the author, open in such hands to such effects. Just before the commencement of the second performance of the piece, a noble lord (now a marquis) requested an interview with Mr. Mathews at the theatre. On this occasion he contrived, in language the most courtly, yet without any definite expression of his object, or more than a vague intimation of the high authority by whom he was deputed, to make his errand fully understood. His lordship was soon satisfied that he had no occasion to use any argument to influence the performer, for Mr. Mathews proved to

* Of the Lord Chief Justice Ellenborough.

him at once that he had fully resolved, from the moment he found his imitation received with such extraordinary vehemence, not to repeat it.

The piece commenced, and a most crowded house greeted him. It was plain that a great sensation had been created. The pit was dense with gentlemen only. The inimitable Liston was not so much attended to as it was usual for him to be; and the anxiety for the judge's charge was fully apparent by the manner of hailing the change of dress which bespoke the period of the representation. The barrister's defence was received with great applause; but, when the judge began his charge, a restless dissatisfaction appeared, and Mr. Mathews was interrupted by a call of "Imitation! imitation!" from all parts of the house, and loudest from the pit, which was said to be almost filled with "men of law." The clamour was so great that at length the object of it went forward, and obtaining a momentary pause, respectfully inquired what was the pleasure of the audience? Here a simultaneous answer burst forth—"The imitation! the imitation!" A gentleman rose above the rest in the pit, and demanded, "Why Mr. Mathews omitted the latter part, and by what authority he was prevented from giving the imitation of the learned judge?" This was followed by loud cries from the rest of the audience of "Answer the question." Mr. Mathews inquired of his interrogator what learned judge he meant? The gentleman declined giving the name; but another nearer to the stage contrived in a low voice to pronounce the one alluded to. Mr. Mathews then again addressed the audience. He assured them that in any imitation of his, it was neither his practice nor purpose to hurt the feelings of any individual. He had heard that a noble and learned lord was much offended in consequence of the accounts in the public papers. (Here a general cry of "No, no!") Mr. Mathews said "that he did not feel himself bound to a repetition of any peculiar manner, which might be liable to public misconstruction; he had heard with deep concern that offence had been taken at the mode of his burlesque representation of a judicial address, from an idea that it had a personal allusion, which he disclaimed. He bore the highest respect for the constituted authorities of his country, and therefore no power on earth should compel him to a continuance of any mode of representation that might, if he knew it, favour the erroneous opinion which had gone forth on this occasion. As to the words of the judicial charge, they were strictly those of the author; but for the tones in which they

had first been uttered, he really felt quite at a loss what to say; he had practised so many voices in the course of his life, that he was not always aware which he might have used for any particular case when it was over. But as the audience seemed to have a favourite, he was willing to prove his anxiety to please them, and would, if they sanctioned the experiment, give the speech in question in various tones and difference of style, which might enable them to point out from amongst the many that which they preferred." This adroit address created great applause. He then proceeded to give the "charge," in imitation of Kemble, Cooke, Incledon, Suett, Munden, Blanchard, and many other public favourites in succession, all with great and some with ludicrous effect, and was still proceeding, when the audience, finding his specimens interminable, began to take the jest; their laughter became uproarious, and their good-humour was completely restored by this *ruse* of the actor to evade their unwelcome call. The result of all this was, that the malcontents were completely reconciled to their first disappointment, and allowed the farce to end without more tumult. But it was on subsequent nights sufficiently apparent that the piece had, for the time, lost its principal attraction; though ultimately its own merit, and the acting generally, soon made it a first-rate favourite.

Not long after this, as an evidence that his legal hit had not made him unpopular with "the Bar," Mr. Mathews was present at a trial in one of the courts, when Mr. Gurney sent the following jocular note to a gentleman whose case was coming on, and whom he saw speaking to Mr. Mathews.

"I shall certainly request that Mr. Mathews shall retire from the court while I open your case, unless he give me his word that he will not exhibit me in "Love, Law, and Physic." J. G.

Mr. Mathews was, in fact, always remarkably delicate in respect to his imitative efforts being at all obtruded upon the notice of the subjects of his imitation to their annoyance. On the night just mentioned, when the audience brought him so closely to answer their urgent calls for the imitation which they had recognised on the first night of "Love, Law, and Physic," and when he hit upon so happy an expedient to restore good-humour without complying with their wishes—after having succeeded in making his peace with the audience, he turned up the stage, and at once perceived why one of his imitations had been so much more effective than the rest. He had totally forgotten, in the

agitation of the moment, that Mr. Blanchard (who in the first uproar had retired to the back) was still upon the stage! That good-natured man met him afterwards behind the scenes with a shake of the hand, by way of congratulating him upon his success in pacifying the tumult, and Mr. Mathews exclaimed, "My dear Blanchard, pray pardon me. I entirely forgot that you were still upon the stage. Good God! how coarse my imitation of you before your face must have appeared!" To this apology Mr. Blanchard, with the greatest *naïveté*, replied, "What, my dear boy, did you mean *that* for me?"—the stress laid upon the word *that* proving that the one imitation best understood and most applauded by the audience, had been the only likeness not recognised by the original. It need not be told to those who have heard it, that this imitation of Blanchard was perfect.

I remember an amusing consequence of my husband's reluctance to represent any persons in their presence, that occurred soon after our settling in London. Mr. Mathews had known Mr. Braham in the autumn of 1803, at Liverpool; and it followed that he gave a perfect imitation of him both in private and public life. Of this Mr. Braham heard, and with all the liberality of good sense and conscious talent, he good-humouredly pressed my husband to show him—what not more than one man in twenty is acquainted with—himself. In vain did he solicit; when one day dining together at a large party, after much importunity of the kind to Braham No. 2, it was discovered that Braham No. 1 had stolen a march upon his host and hostess—in fact, he had disappeared during the dessert, and it was said had left the house. After this fact was ascertained, it was urged that in the absence of the great original, Mr. Mathews could do no less than represent him, for the consolation of his bereaved friends; and, under such circumstances, he at length yielded, and the great vocalist's absence was fully compensated for the time, by Braham No. 2, who even favoured the company with one of his most popular songs.

When the general enjoyment was at its height, two ladies, between whom Mr. Braham had sat at dinner, seemed as if suddenly discomposed, when a figure rose slowly from under the table, and in tones which seemed uttered as if intended in illustration of the recent imitation, pronounced, "Very well, Mathews! exceedingly like, indeed! nay, perfect, if I know myself!" And *the* Braham stood confessed! In fact, he had crept under the table, with the aid of several confederates, unseen by my husband (though by my concurrence), and thus overheard the imitation which he had before despaired of ever hearing.

The most remarkable result of Mr. Mathews's imitation of Lord Ellenborough in "Love, Law, and Physic," was his receiving a "request" that he would go to Carlton House on a certain evening. On his arrival, he was immediately ushered into the presence of the Prince, who was surrounded by a very small circle. After a most gracious reception, the general conversation was resumed, as it appeared, and he was for some time at a loss to guess the immediate cause of his invitation. At length, the Prince began to speak of the extraordinary sensation Mr. Mathews's recent imitation had caused, adding, that he had the greatest desire in the world to hear it; and concluded by saying, that it would be considered as a favour if Mr. Mathews would then give the "charge to the jury," as he had given it on the first night of the new farce. My husband felt distressingly embarrassed. He glanced round at the party, and his eye for a moment fell upon the nobleman with whom he had the interview on the second night of the piece, and who was looking particularly grave. Mr. Mathews obviously hesitated, which the Prince observing, said, "Oh, don't be afraid, Mr. Mathews—we're all tiled here. Come, pray oblige me: I'm longing to hear it. I'm something of a mimic myself. My brother here" (turning to the Duke of York) "can tell you, that I give a very fair imitation of Lord Eldon. With respect to yours of Lord Ellenborough, it was not so well when you found it so taken up to continue it in public, and I am very glad your own good taste and feeling prompted you to refuse a repetition of it; but here you need have no scruples."

Mr. Mathews felt very reluctant to obey the Prince's wishes, though so gently and kindly enforced, for although there were not altogether twenty persons present, yet he could not help feeling that amongst them there might be some personal friend of the Lord Chief Justice. However, he was commanded, and, *malgré lui*, he obeyed.

The Prince was in raptures, and declared himself astonished at the closeness of the imitation, shutting his eyes while he listened to it with excessive enjoyment, and many exclamations of wonder and delight, such as "Excellent! perfect! It is he himself!" The Duke of York manifested his approval in peals of laughter and the Prince afterwards conversed most kindly and agreeably upon the subject with my husband and the high personages present, for some time. When Mr. Mathews returned home, he declared to me, that had he had the remotest idea of the cause of his summons to the palace, he would have formed some excuse

rather than appear on an occasion so truly embarrassing to his feelings.

In the course of this season he had opportunities of showing himself at Covent Garden Theatre in more regular dramatic characters, such as *Kite* in "The Recruiting Officer," *Trinculo* in "The Tempest," &c.; and, during Mrs. Jordan's engagement for a limited period, he had the advantage of appearing in the same plays with her in several of his favourite old men, as *Foresight* in "Love for Love," &c. The town allowed that he could command their approval in legitimate comedy as well as in farce. Nor was it less gratifying to him to find himself an object in this way with the performers on their benefit nights. The following compliment from the Thalia of the day, will be a proof that his acting was appreciated by the best judges in his own profession.

To Charles Mathews, Esq.

Cadogan Place, Wednesday.

Sir,—I shall be extremely obliged to you if you will allow me to gratify my friends, all admirers of yours, with your performance of *Sir Bashful Constant* in "The Way to Keep Him."

I remain, sir, yours, Dora Jordan.

Mrs. Jordan not only admired Mr. Mathews's public talent, but, after she became intimate with him, honoured him with many attentions. He was frequently invited to the house of this fascinating actress, and visited her on several occasions of domestic interest. He always accepted her invitations when he could, and became strongly attached to her society. He used to say that her fine joy-inspiring tones, and her natural and peculiar manner of speaking, always carried a warmth to his heart which no other voice ever conveyed, and seemed to do him good. She was indeed an extraordinary and exquisite being, and as distinct from any other person in the world as she was superior to all her contemporaries in her particular line of acting. I believe the following invitation was the last my husband ever received from her hand, and it was carefully preserved by him in his collection of autographs.

To Charles Mathews, Esq.

Cadogan Place, Friday.

Sir,—My son, Captain Fitzclarence, having a party here on Monday the 11th, to take leave of his friends on his going abroad, is desirous of having the pleasure of knowing you before he goes; and at his request I now do myself the pleasure of enclosing you a card.

I remain yours obediently, Dora Jordan.

CHAPTER XVII.

Mr. Mathews commanded to perform at Carlton House—His previous visit to that palace—Disposal of the cottage in the King's-road—Mr. Mathews's return to town—Letter from Mr. Theodore Hook, from the Mauritius.

At this period Mr. Mathews received another gracious summons from the Prince Regent to Carlton House, requesting him to entertain the Court with some specimens of his "rare talents," on a particular evening, and requiring him to call on the morning previously. When Mr. Mathews arrived, he found the Duke of York with his royal brother, and both received him with the most cordial kindness. The Prince, in his fascinating manner, thanked him for what he was pleased to term his "good-nature," in consenting to gratify him with his performance, adding, he was quite aware that it was a particular instance, and that Mr. Mathews never anywhere else exhibited his powers out of his profession; but he said, "The Queen* has long felt an earnest desire to witness them, and had often been disappointed of that pleasure." The Prince then entered upon his reason for requesting the present call, which, in fact, was nothing less than a delicate consideration for Mr. Mathews's comfort and convenience in the evening. His Royal Highness wished him to make choice of a position in the room most agreeable to his purpose and general accommodation. Perceiving Mr. Mathews in doubt where to fix, the Prince explained to him that he had himself arranged, if no better plan suggested itself, everything for his comfort. "This," said his Royal Highness, "this is the apartment we intend to be in; at the farther end of it I have had your table placed, as you see, there being a door close to it opening into another room, to which you can retire and refresh yourself as often as you feel disposed. I have personally attended to everything within it, and hope you will be pleased." Then leading the way to what proved a double-door, the Prince opened the first, where his progress was arrested by a sight

* Queen Charlotte.

which was enough to make his "two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres." It was no less than a housemaid's broom, and a quantity of dust, deposited in a vulgar heap in the middle of the doorway, which the sweeper, good easy soul, not dreaming that her royal master would have occasion before the wonted hour to pass through these doors, had left to be removed at her convenience. It was whimsical to see the look of the Prince at this discovery, at which the "Duke his brother" laughed incontinently for several minutes. "Now really," said the Prince, after a brief contemplation of the obstruction, and trying to seem angry—"really, this is too bad!" and taking the broom in his hand, removed it from the middle of the passage across which it laid; while the Duke, whose laughter was renewed at this action, cried out, "Ay, sweep it up yourself, brother; sweep it up yourself!" The Prince, however, directed a person in waiting to "see to it," and then gravely passed through to the other room, followed by the Duke and my husband, the former still laughing immoderately. Alas! for a palace where housemaids are merely human beings, and careless as in less "well-regulated families." Very absurd and unreasonable is the surprise we feel when anything within a royal residence is found agreeing with the ordinary chances or defects of common life. I remember Mr. Mathews returning from a subsequent visit to his royal master (on the eve of his coronation), and telling me how much he had been diverted by observing a fracture (or what a sempstress would term a ladder) in the back part of his Majesty's black silk stocking, with which he had unconsciously walked about the whole evening.

But to return to the result of the Prince's considerate forethought for the comfort of his entertainer, for whose performance everything proved as technically arranged as if under the superintendence of a stage-manager. At night, the room assigned for his refreshment contained an elegant supper, and all was prepared that princely breeding could suggest to render everything agreeable to my husband.

During Mr. Mathews's performance, which was his "Mail-coach Adventures," the Prince was not only extremely attentive himself, but would not suffer a sound from any of his visitors to disturb, or an eye to be turned away from, the object of the evening; nay, once, when "the Queen his mother" made some observation aloud to a lady near her, the Prince, with one of his sweet smiles, looked at her, and placed his finger on his lips expressively, to which silent reproof her Majesty nodded good-

humouredly, and resumed her attention. But it was remarked by my husband that, although the Princess Charlotte talked frequently and loudly, her royal father did not seem to notice it, or make any attempt to check her interruptions, as he had done those of others; so far from it, that had such a thing been possible, it might have been supposed from his manner that he was unconscious of his daughter's non-observance of his polite example and general injunction.

Between the acts, which Mr. Mathews had made three for the better relief of his audience, the Prince came up to him, and chatted upon the different portions of the entertainment, and the recollections to which it gave rise. At the close of the evening he shook hands with Mr. Mathews, and thanked him in the names of all present, and his own, for "the treat" he had afforded them. All this was very gratifying, but my husband, nevertheless, returned to his cottage, relieved that his efforts were over, always feeling during such tasks like him who, once out of his place and position, sang,

I wish I was at home again, and had my working clothes on.

At the close of Covent Garden Theatre Mr. Mathews left home once more, on a tour in the provinces, and to the metropolis of Scotland, where he was, as usual, warmly welcomed.

At the beginning of September he received an invitation from a Devonshire friend in the neighbourhood of Exeter, who was desirous of a visit from him at this time, as he said he wished him to see a "very clever young man," then performing in the above town—forwarding, by way of preparation, the following bill, which I shall insert, because it is curious in itself, and sets to rest the question much agitated at the time of Mr. Kean's first popularity in London, whether or not he had ever seen the performance of Mr. Cooke (his celebrated predecessor in "Richard the Third").

Mr. Kean's Farewell.

For one night only. Hotel Assembly Room.

Wednesday, Sept. 8th, 1813.

Mr. Kean, with the most lively sense of gratitude for all past favours, begs leave to inform the inhabitants of Exeter, that (previously to his departure for the Theatre Royal, Liverpool,) he has selected a most pleasing variety of Entertainments, consisting of songs, recitations, and pantomime, which he will at the above-mentioned rooms have the honour of presenting.

Part the First.—Imitations of the London Performers, given by

Mr. Kean before their Majesties at Frogmore Fête. Mr. Kemble, as Cardinal Wolsey: "Had I but served my God with half the zeal I served my King, he would not, in mine age, have left me naked to my enemies." Mr. Cooke, as King Richard the Third. Mr. Barrymore, as Earl Osmond. Mr. Incledon, as the Quaker. Mr. Braham, as Prince Orlando. The Young Roscius, as Norval. Mr. Munden, as Sir Abel Handy. Mr. Fawcett, as Caleb Quotem.

The celebrated Comic Song of "Beggars and Ballad Singers." The African Slave's Appeal to Liberty. After which a serious Ballet (performed only in the Theatres of Paris, and the Opera-house, London), called the "Instructions of Chiron to Achilles." Achilles, by the pupil of Nature, Master Howard Kean. Chiron, Mr. Kean. With appropriate music, dresses, &c.

PART THE SECOND.—George Alexander Stevens's "Description of a Storm," in character, and after the manner of Incledon. Humorous Recitation of "Monsieur Tonson." "Tell her I love her" (by particular desire), Mr. Kean.

Admission tickets, 3*s.* to be had of Mr. Kean, at Miss Hakes's, High-street; &c.

Mr. Mathews's approaching duties at Covent Garden Theatre, however, precluded him from witnessing the "clever young man's" performance, and he was obliged to stay his curiosity, which was destined not to remain long ungratified, though not exactly in so versatile a way as that offered to him by his friend, for Mr. Kean's London engagement soon followed.

It was Mr. Mathews's wish that his son should be educated at the school in which he was himself brought up (Merchant Tailors') and he was accordingly placed upon the foundation by our friend Mr. Silvester, the Recorder.* Charles was, as I have before said, intended for the Church, and this arrangement would have proved a great advantage to him in pursuance of that intention. He boarded with the head-master of the school, the Rev. Thomas Cherry; but, though thus provided with a home, how could the parents of an only child, so young too as he was, forego the means of receiving him as often as a holiday gave occasion? This, with some prudential reasons, determined my husband to part with his cottage, of which he was so fond, and it was, after a severe struggle, forthwith advertised for sale. Before we were prepared for removal, or could expect to dispose of our favourite abode, a gentleman was introduced to Mr. Mathews by Mr. Ralph Benson, then M.P. for Stafford, who immediately fell knee-deep in love with our cottage, and all therein

* Afterwards Sir John Silvester.

contained—literally so; for from that moment he and his lady, with her sister, who, like the "slight acquaintances" in Mr. Canning's "Rovers," had at the first glance vowed an eternal friendship for me, became, in fact, our most attached friends.

After the terms for the purchase of the cottage were agreed upon (that is, the remainder of the lease), and a quantity of furniture and fixtures appropriate to the place, Mr. Thompson (the gentleman who had purchased the cottage) pressed for immediate possession. Anxious to accommodate him, we hastily took a house in Cadogan-terrace, which we determined to furnish at our leisure. In the meantime we made our abode in a furnished lodging in that part of Lisle-street, which looked down Leicester-place into the square; a situation determined upon because it was the only one which we could find at the moment without an opposite neighbour, my husband having a morbid horror of eyes "glaring," as he said, upon all his movements. Here, in the month of June, we "located" for a few months, and here our newly-acquired friends visited us frequently; but, to Mr. Mathews's great embarrassment, no mention in any of these visits was made of payment for the "charming cottage," which, however, they invited us to visit once, in order to "show our eyes, and grieve our hearts," with the alterations (they called them improvements), made with gilded finery and gaudy draperies, in a place which had derived all its merit from rustic fittings up of bamboo, chintz, and white muslin; while the walls, once overrun with roses on trellis-paper, with looking-glass let into the piers to reflect and multiply any pretty effects, had given place to yellow flock-paper, and gold cornices and frames. All this, as my husband observed to me, was evidence of as bad taste as eating the wrong ends of asparagus would be. He was fretted to see the pretty simple toy transformed by meretricious taste into a vulgar mass of pretension; and we never went again—unluckily, as it happened. Mr. Thompson, however, still "took his ease at our inn," but was too much of a gentleman to mention money, and my poor husband was too delicate to introduce the word, believing from day to day that all would come naturally round. His own honest nature had not suggested the expediency of any formal agreement with a person whose manners and mode of introduction seemed to ensure an honourable result. At last I persuaded him to intimate gently, that his arrangements required immediate funds, and this produced an apology, and a promise, in the shape of a note of hand, payable at a short date. But from this moment the calls of

my "slight acquaintance," his wife, became less frequent; her sister, it is true, stepped in, but her visits were also "short and far between;" while "Monsieur Tonson" did not "come again." My husband was thus circumstanced, when one day an acquaintance walked into the room with a catalogue in his hand of a sale from which he had just come, saying he would not have missed possessing himself of something that had been ours for the world! What? The truth came out,—the cottage-lease, with all the fixtures and effects, furniture, glass, china, &c. had been sold off by the gentleman so artfully, that we had not even heard of his intention; and when we sent to the King's-road to make inquiries into the particulars, the cottage was found closed, and all the Tonsons gone off to France, with the proceeds of the sale in their pockets.

Here was a loss (something indeed of the character of Father Foigard's) of seven hundred pounds, which we intended to receive,* and bad as it proved, there was, as in all misfortunes, some consolation mixed up in it. This wholesale swindler had petitioned hard to have the paintings left which hung up in one of the rooms (for Mr. Mathews's giant hobby was then in its infancy), on the plea of gracing the walls until time was ripe for papering and gilding. But as soon would my husband have left behind him an eye or a limb as these his treasures; and thus he preserved what to have been robbed of would have grieved him more than twenty times the money lost. Luckily, too, we had not attempted to furnish the house in Cadogan-terrace; but we had an expensive rent growing there, and this was an additional care. In this dilemma, we put off our removal for a month or so, and Mr. Mathews continued his Haymarket engagement, in broiling weather, in a London lodging, comforting himself with the view of his paintings, hung all over the walls of our sitting-rooms, which had been snatched by his care from the common ruin of the cottage. All he ever saw of the "loved spot" more, was from a peep over the paling, in his rides and drives, when his sight was regaled for some weeks by closed shutters pasted over with the bills of the recent sale!*

* *Father Foigard*, the Irishman in the comedy of the "Beaux Stratagem," complains that the runaway innkeeper has robbed him of two hundred pounds —namely, one hundred that he (Foigard) owed him, and one hundred that he *intended* to owe him.

† It is but just to Mr. Ralph Benson that I explain, that when he introduced Mr. Thompson to our acquaintance, he thought him still in possession of fortune and honour: he was not then aware that he had squandered the one and discarded the other; and Mr. Benson himself was also a severe sufferer by Mr. Thompson's artifices.

Mr. Theodore Hook, whose departure for the Mauritius, it may be remembered, has been mentioned in a preceding letter from Mr. Colman, had not, in leaving England, left behind him the recollection of his friends there. The following communication will be found most interesting and characteristic. As it was welcome to him to whom it was addressed, so will it be now to the public, who are admirers of Mr. Hook's talents.

To Charles Mathews, Esq.

La Reduit, Mauritius, March 24th, 1814.

My dear Mathews,—Uninteresting as a letter must be from an individual in a little African island, to you who are at the very head-quarters and emporium of news and gaiety, I shall risk annoying you and write, begging you to take along with you that the stupidity of my epistle proceeds in a great measure from the dearth of anything worthy the name of intelligence; for if I had anything to say, say it I would.

I have received so much powerful assistance from your public talents in my short dramatic career, and have enjoyed so very many pleasant hours in your private society, that I feel a great pride and gratification from this distance, where flattery cannot be suspected, nor interested motives attach themselves to praise, to express how warmly I feel and how duly I appreciate both your exertions and your powers; and, as the lovers say in the Poets,

Though mountains rise and oceans roll between us,

I shall not forget how much I am indebted to you. You have read enough of this island, I dare say, not to imagine that we live in huts on the sea-coast, or that, like our gallant forefathers, we paint ourselves blue, and vote pantaloons a prejudice. We are here surrounded by every luxury which art can furnish, or dissipation suggest, in a climate the most delightful, in a country the most beautiful, society the most gay, and pursuits the most fascinating.

This is, by heavens! a Paradise, and not without angels. The women are all handsome (not so handsome as English women), all accomplished, their manners extremely good, wit brilliant, and good-nature wonderful; this is picking out the best! The "οι πολλοι," as we say at Oxford, are, if I may use the word, mindless—all blank—dance like devils, and better than any people, for, like all fools, they are fond of it, and naturally excel in proportion to their mental debility; for the greater the fool the better the dancer.

We have operas in the winter, which sets in about July; but the Opera-house here is a subscription; the renters have quarrelled, the manager, Fleury, is in prison, and the affairs of the theatre are before the courts of appeal. In short, the whole island is like fairy-land; every hour seems happier than the last; and, altogether, from the mildness of the air (the sweetness of which, as it passes over spice plantations and orange groves, is hardly conceivable), the clearness of

the atmosphere, the coolness of the evenings, and the loveliness of the place itself, all combine to render it fascination. The very thought of ever quitting it is like the apprehension of the death or long parting with some near relation; and if it were not that this feeling is counteracted by having some friends at home, whom I shall be anxious to see, there is no inducement that would draw me from such a perfect *Thule*.

I have wept over poor Virginia's grave; I saw her cottage, and an old slave whose father remembers the loss of the St. Guan. I do not know what this gentleman's papa might have been, but I like Munden in *Dominique* infinitely better.* Your neighbour, the Nova Scotia baronet, Sir R—— B——, and his daughter, made a similar exhibition on the same spot. The *Roxburgh Castle*, in which they came out, came to this island about ten days sooner than the captain or the crew expected, and therefore bumped ashore. All the cargo lost, but the baronet and his daughter were saved.

I send you in this letter a piece of the bamboo which I pulled from Paul and Virginia's grave.

I must request you will acknowledge this letter, and tell me some news. I have given up all thoughts of finishing my Covent Garden farce, and have returned Harry Harris the money he had paid me *en avance;* so that you see I am turned lazy. However, I shall be just as happy to hear of all things going on; not but I suppose, by the time I come back to England, I shall hear that Mr. Watkins is the best *Hamlet*, Mr. Higgens the most effective *Archer*, and Mrs. Grogan the sweetest *Juliet* that ever acted; so much will time change circumstances. Pray remember me to Colman.

Make my kind remembrances to Mrs. Mathews, and tell her that I hope to shake hands with her when we are both twaddlers—that is, when she is as much of a twaddler as old age can make her; and that when I return upon crutches from foreign parts, I trust she will direct her son to pay me every attention due to my infirmities. By the way, hang me if all your French farces, prints, costumes, and all, arn't here. What shall I do? I will send them—first to Fleury, and desire him to act them here; then I will point out the effective, and return them to you. I do assure you I do not know how they got here; but Roll's farces are here, too, which I will take great care of, and bring back with me whenever I come.

I hope they are all well. Any private theatre this year? I suppose so, for it is as impossible for an alderman not to love turtle, as it would be for Rolls not to do everything he can to make his friends happy.

Psha! my letter is all about myself. Egotism from beginning to the end. Like Argus, there are at least a hundred *I*'s in it. Well, d—— my *I*'s, I will substitute the other vowel, and assure you that, although at this distance, I am sincerely and truly yours, and that you will find even in Mauri*t*ius U and I are not far asunder. "If you happen to know" how Hill is, let me hear of him, and make my regards—"pooh!

* *Dominique*, a comic character in the afterpiece of "Paul and Virginia."

thousands of them. Not thousands exactly," but enough to prove how happy I shall be to hear he is well.

D——, if he has not grown wiser as he has grown older, is, I suppose, married. In his situation "a joke's a joke." "Blood! but that's too much for friendship." I can't spell the noise he makes with his mouth, or I would add that.

Where is poor Ben Thompson? I find by a letter which has been opened in England, from him to me, that he "damns my iron heart" for having deserted him in his utmost need: wherein he is wrong. I deserted my country; "My native land I bade adieu," but circumstances, *cœlum non animum, mutant*, and I am as much and as warmly interested in him and his fate as ever.

Is Mrs. Scott Waring likely to add to the family at Peterborough House? If she does, I think Master John and his father will be two, and, logical rubs set aside, the major and the minor won't agree. So that whether in Europe or Africa, the charm and spell are the same. I enclose you Mr. Fleury's letter to me as a theatrical bijou. His way of spelling my name not bad.

Our races begin in July; we have also an excellent beef-steak club; the best Freemasons' lodge in the world. We have subscription concerts and balls, and the parties in private houses here are seldom less than from two to three hundred. At the last ball given by Mrs. Farquhar, at the Government-house, upwards of seven hundred and fifty ladies were present, which, considering that the greater proportion of the female population are not admissible, proves the number of inhabitants, and the extent of the society.

I dare say some of my fat-headed friends in that little island where the beef grows, and where you live, fancy that I am making a fortune, considering that I am Treasurer! Accountant-general! Fresh butter, my dear fellow, is ten shillings per pound; a coat costs thirty pounds English; a pair of gloves fifteen shillings; a bottle of claret, the best, tenpence; and pine-apples, a penny a piece. Thus, you see, while the articles necessary to existence are exorbitant, luxuries are dirt cheap, and a pretty life we do lead. Breakfast at eight, always up by gun-fire, five o'clock; bathe and ride before breakfast, after breakfast lounge about; at one have a regular meal, ycleped a tiffin—hot meats, vegetables, and at this we sit generally through the heat of the day, drinking our wine and munching our fruit; at five, or half-past, the carriages come to the door, and we go either in them or in palanquins to dress, which operation performed, we drive out to the race-ground, and through the Champ de Mars, the Hyde Park here, till half-past six; come into town, and at seven dine, where we remain till ten or eleven, and then join the French parties, as there is regularly a ball somewhere or other every night: these things, blended with business, make out the day and evening.

I shall draw to a conclusion this very dull letter, by assuring you, with my best regards to Mrs. Mathews, and Charles, how truly I am,

Dear Mathews, yours, T. E. Hook.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Mr. Mathews's severe accident in company with Mr. Terry—Mr. Colman's letter—Mr. Mathews's re-appearancee at the Haymarket in "Hocus Pocus"—Mr. Mathews at Brighton—His lameness incurable—Letter of Mr. Henry Harris—Mr. Mathews's letters to Mrs. Mathews from Birmingham and Stratford-upon-Avon.

On the 22nd of July, 1814, just after Mr. Mathews had made his second appearance in *Falstaff*, and was prepared to "trammel up the consequence" by fresh improvement upon his successful efforts in that difficult part, an event occurred which altered the whole course of his professional feelings, and suspended his public exertions for a time altogether. Mr. Mathews, whose only means now of escaping sometimes from London smoke depended upon an occasional drive in his tilbury, had one day arranged to take me with him for an hour or so; when Mr. Terry,* full of anxiety and haste, came up to the door just as we were starting, and earnestly requested, as a great favour, that I would resign my place to him, as he had the most pressing desire to be taken quickly a few miles out of town on important and sudden business, and had come for the purpose of soliciting the drive. Of course, I immediately descended, and the two friends drove off. In a few minutes after, a stranger knocked loudly at the street-door, and briefly announced that "Mr. Mathews had just been thrown out of his tilbury, and was dangerously hurt," adding no intelligence of the place where the event had occurred. The servant to whom this inconsiderate information was delivered, in his first alarm immediately ran up to me, repeating in an agitated voice the alarming news. I remained in a state of great

* Daniel Terry, comedian, born 1780, and originally intended for an architect, evinced a great liking for the stage, which was fostered by his most intimate friend, Sir Walter Scott, who obtained him several engagements, and in 1825 advanced him the capital requisite to become joint partner with Mr. Yates in the lesseeship of the Adelphi Theatre. On Sir Walter's bankruptcy, Mr. Terry found it necessary to sell his share in the property, and retired to the Continent, where he died in 1828.

agitation a full hour, when a coach slowly approached the house, and my husband was taken from it, as I believed dead! This dreadful apprehension was changed to a feeling of almost equal sorrow from the afflicting groans uttered by the sufferer, insensible as he seemed in other respects, while two strangers bore him up-stairs to his room.

I can but imperfectly remember the particulars of that day and night, for a dangerous illness attacked me shortly after, which almost caused an oblivion of the preceding horrors, except when I was aroused to some recollection of it by the frequent groans of my dear husband, who lay in the next chamber to myself in agonies too great to be conceived, whenever the surgeons attempted to ascertain the nature of his hurt. When any change of position was requisite, these evidences of suffering were heart-piercing. Only for a time, however, while they were intense, did he allow what he felt to appear to those about him. Impatient in trifles, he was the most calm and enduring of human beings on all great occasions; and it always seemed to me as if he resented petty annoyances, because they rose from petty sources, but that he bent with humble resignation to greater inflictions because he believed they came direct from the Almighty. In the intervals of his excessive pains he became even merry, and sportive as a child. When he was tired of reading, he would amuse himself with his violin, flute, and flageolet in turn; and when he heard a visitor approaching, whom he guessed came with a serious face of condolement to the house, expecting to find him in a most wretched state of mind as well as body, he would scrape up a tune, after the manner of a blind fiddler at a fair, and welcome the person with all sorts of drollery. A friend one day laughing at his musical vein at such a time, brought him when he next called two other instruments, which he had purchased at the Hyde-park Fair, held in commemoration of the visit of the illustrious foreigners to England, in order, as he said, to afford him variety in his practice. These the invalid received with much gravity and affected gratitude; when the donor left him, he applied himself to the study of the Jew's-harp and penny trumpet, in both of which it was his humour to attain a proficiency before the next visit of his friend. His success with the latter instrument was confessed two or three years after by the public, when in the character of one of the *Master Dilberrys* he performed "God Save the King" upon it, and convulsed the audience with laughter. In this manner, propped up in his bed, he cheated his pains—and I fear misled his medical men, who

probably considered his case less serious, from his cheerfulness under it; for how could they be aware that a man so sensitive and restless upon minor matters, could be capable of such endurance of intense suffering? They did not know that one was the triumph of nerves—the other of heart.

But to the particulars of the accident. Mr. Terry's business carrying them down Charing-cross, they were proceeding thither very rapidly. Mr. Mathews was driving a favourite blood-horse of high courage (a term which describes an animal more susceptible of fear than any other). Suddenly, from some unperceived cause, the creature was startled, and before the driver could pull up his somewhat slackened reins, the horse dropped his tail over one of them so fixedly that all control over him was lost, and he trotted onwards with desperate speed. Dreading a collision with one of the many vehicles meeting them, Mr. Mathews used the one rein on his left side to avoid the public way, when the sudden check of turning into Privy Gardens over the slippery pathway caused the horse to fall, and the shock threw out to a great distance my husband and his friend, who were both taken up quite insensible. How they were recognised, I never knew, or I have forgotten. Mr. Terry was at first supposed to be the most seriously injured of the two, but happily, in less than a fortnight he appeared as well as ever, having only broken two of his ribs. This result was, I remember, a great source of comfort to my husband in his calamity, whose first anxiety was for him to whom he had, though innocently, caused such a misfortune.

This accident was not only painful to Mr. Terry, and serious to my husband, but at the same time most embarrassing to the proprietors of the Haymarket Theatre, whose whole dependence was upon these two performers for the season. Mr. Mathews had, a few evenings before, made what is technically called a hit, in the character of *Falstaff*, and had, as I have already said, repeated it the night previously to this sad catastrophe with increased effect. The surgeons did not anticipate any lasting consequences from the hurt, and even promised a speedy restoration. Under such a report it could neither be wondered at that Mr. Colman was anxious, in his distress, for Mr. Mathews's return, who on his part felt a generous concern for the situation of his employer. Sanguine of his speedy recovery, he allowed a character to be written for him by Mr. Colman, for his reappearance. The importance of the loss sustained by the theatre in the absence of my husband's services is a fact of which Mr.

Colman was too generous to wish to withhold his full appreciation.

On the 12th of August, the following account, published at the time, announces his return to the Haymarket, under circumstances as painful as unprecedented.

A new afterpiece, under the title of "Hocus Pocus, or Harlequin Washed White," was produced here. It is a species of performance which defies criticism; partaking at once of farce, comedy, tragedy, and pantomime, and possessing the novelty of three harlequins, and apparently designed for the purpose of introducing Mr. Mathews to the public again, after his recovery from his late severe accident.

The prologue was spoken by Mr. Terry, and contained some good points, which were loudly applauded. After it was concluded, Mr. Terry addressed the audience as follows:—

"Ladies and Gentlemen.—Before the curtain rises I am requested to say a few words to you in behalf of an invalid. Mr. Mathews (applause) still continues to suffer much, very much, from his late severe accident; but he trusts that his anxiety in coming forward thus early to perform his duty to you, and to fulfil his engagements here, will atone for his deficiencies in bodily activity, requisite to the character he is about to sustain. (Great applause.) A former very celebrated proprietor of this theatre once enjoyed the fullest favour as 'a devil upon *two* sticks,' and it is hoped, nay, it cannot be doubted, that you will now extend your utmost indulgence to a 'harlequin upon *one*.'"*

It is needless to add, that Mr. Mathews was on his appearance greeted with the loudest applause. He is still extremely lame, and required a crutch stick for his support. His right side seems to have particularly suffered, and it is difficult to separate the idea of pain from even his happiest efforts.

In one scene, where he disguised himself as "Jacky Long Legs," it was impossible to conceive anything more perfect than the modification of his voice in imitating a child six years old.

The following impromptu on this performance appeared in a newspaper at the time:—

It seems, if obliged on his crutches to play,
At Harlequin, Mathews will aim.
If so, very fairly the public may say,
'Tis the first time his efforts were *lame*.

At the close of the Haymarket season Mr. Mathews went to Brighton for the advantage of the shampooing baths, which Mr. Carpue had so strenuously recommended; and there upon his crutches he at least felt the benefit of air and rest.

* The celebrated proprietor will of course be recollected—Mr. Foote, the Aristophanes of his day, had the misfortune to lose his leg by an accident similar, I believe, to that of Mr. Mathews.

It must be evident that Mr. Mathews knew his own case best, even better than his surgeons, as the result—namely, twenty-five years' sad experience of incurable lameness—proved; not that he then believed he should be so afflicted for the remainder of his life; but his scepticism as to a speedy recovery was justified by his own feelings, although his fortitude, and frequent high spirits, misled his surgeons. These will sufficiently excuse and account for their miscalculations of the extent of the injury he had sustained.

The following is a kind letter from his manager, Mr. Henry Harris:—

To Charles Mathews, Esq.

Nov. 5th, 1814.

Dear Mathews,—While you are deriving advantage from the shampooing, sea air, and riding, I should by no means advise you to quit that certainty for any uncertain remedy. In what I said I only meant, that when from the bad weather setting in, you come to a stand-still and cannot report progress, then you had better come to town, and try electricity, which, whatever is said to the contrary, I know from experience in many cases, is of great assistance when properly and regularly applied by a skilful operator, very seldom to be met with, but which my friend Lowndes most certainly is.

Robins quite misunderstood me in stating that your acting at the Haymarket weakened your claim for a salary: as there is no precedent for any such claim, without having joined the company, how can it be weakened?

I might have lamented that you ever did perform there after your accident, as it has so much retarded your cure, and deprived us of your assistance; but under all the circumstances I do not see how you could, without the sacrifice of their interests, have done otherwise, more particularly previous to Mrs. Gibbs's benefit. After that by taking advantage of my command, you might have got away for a week sooner; but I agree with you, that it is quite useless to refer to what cannot now be prevented, and so let the subject drop.

I wish it was in our power to do more for you, for I assure you I feel much for your losses; but I hope that the succeeding year will be as lucky as the last was unfortunate, and that you will be able to bring up your lee-way.

Robins mentioned something about your performing your Budget for a few nights previously to your playing in London: if you can put a few hundreds in your pocket in that way, you know I should not object to it.

Miss O'Neil established herself last night in *Isabella*, as the first tragic actress of the day: her attraction is likely to continue, having real merit for its support.

The Macbeth* of to-night I should think would be different.

* At Drury-lane.

I find you do not like the little piece that was sent you: it had an effect in Paris, and I thought, with your suggestions, it might have done.

Ever yours sincerely, H. Harris.

In consequence of Mr. Harris's permission, my husband resumed his public labours, performing his entertainment of the "Mail-coach," first at Brighton to crowded houses, and afterwards at the various towns, whence he writes to me on my return home.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Birmingham, Dec. 15th, 1814.

You have really been more anxious and uneasy respecting my accident and the ultimate consequence than myself. I cannot reward your kindness at present, but by immediate attention to your desires and anxiety. Instantly on the receipt of your letter I consulted a surgeon; the experiment has been made; I have been perched up against the wall before two persons, at distinct times and places, and the unqualified opinion is, that there is not the minutest atom of difference between the two feet when close together—both legs are of a length. I have just arrived at the hospital with the surgeon, who has brought me here for the benefit of the best electrical machine in the town. I have had the satisfaction, for the first time since my accident, of seeing two skeletons, one with, and the other without muscles. I have therefore a good idea of the nature of my accident, which has been described to me practically and theoretically. I am almost afraid * * * * is a blockhead; the surgeons here laughed at the socket of the muscle. I *may* have one—but it is peculiar—a gift, like ventriloquism, for I cannot find it in the remains of the two respectable gentlemen I have seen, and one was a very skilful mail-robber and murderer, six feet four. I have just been electrified, which I shall be every day while I am here. Now write me what Carpue says,—will he promise me to be quite well again? I don't care one penny if it is two years to come, for I never wish to act again, and that will please the inquisitorial editor. I'll be only a "mimic." The surgeon here thinks I shall walk again. As soon as Carpue promises this, let me know. In great haste, but delighted to save the post, and you, dearest, a moment's uneasiness,

I am ever (lame or active) yours, C. Mathews.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Stratford, Dec. 19th, 1814.

I think I said in my last, I should not quit Birmingham before Monday; but, thank Heaven, I have made my escape!

I have accepted an offer from the manager of Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon, to fill up my time till Christmas, when I join Crisp at Shrewsbury, that I may enjoy an opportunity which never before

presented itself, of wandering about the place where the divine Willy, "Sweet swan of Avon," was born. I open there to-morrow, and play a second night on Thursday. I have to-day been over Warwick Castle, one of the most magnificent specimens of Gothic architecture now left in the kingdom. There are some glorious pictures by Rubens, Rembrandt, lots of Vandykes, very interesting indeed; original portraits of the Charleses, Henry VIII., Mary Queen of Scots, and one that would have made you scream—a portrait of poor old George's mother, and of him when an infant, and so like him! They showed me the ribs of the dun cow that Guy slew, certainly large enough for an elephant; his sword, above four feet long; his walking-stick, seven feet; and his porridge-pot of bronze, weighing eight hundred lbs., and capable of containing one hundred gallons, which the porter gravely told me Guy could eat half full for his breakfast.

C. Mathews.

CHAPTER XIX.

Mr. Mathews's return to town, and appearance in the character of *Falstaff*—Whimsical mistake—Lord Tamworth—Result of a Greenwich dinner—A moral lesson—Dinner at Long's with Mr. Walter Scott and Lord Byron—Mr. Mathews leaves town with Mr. Walter Scott—The "Man on the Great Horse," a startling incident of the road—Letters of Mr. Mathews from Northampton—Account of his performance there—Mr. Mathews visits Warwick Castle and Kenilworth with Mr. Walter Scott—Indiscreet disclosure of the authorship of the Waverley novels—Letter from Mr. Mathews from Staffordshire; great theatrical exertion; curious epitaphs—Letter from Mr. Mathews from Derbyshire—Invitation of Mr. Mathews to Windsor Castle by Queen Charlotte—The Irish Mathews and his wife.

At the close of his provincial ramble, Mr. Mathews adjourned to Brighton, whence, after a stay of some duration, he returned to town on the 28th of March, and performed *Falstaff* for the first time at Covent Garden.

Mr. Mathews had a great horror of a crowd, however genteel a one it might be. A large evening party was his particular abhorrence, and whenever we dined at any house, and heard during the dessert the street-door intimation that the hostess "saw company" in the evening, Mr. Mathews would give me a look almost of anguish. When obliged to appear in the drawing-room, he would do so in the most quiet manner, and then place himself as much as possible out of general observation. A curious circumstance happened one evening about this time, in an insufferably crowded room. We were sitting behind a door upon one large chair (the only one vacant), his lameness requiring rest, and his gallantry not choosing to allow me to stand: we were waiting for an opportunity to escape without chance of arrest by the lady of the house, when a servant out of livery presented some ices. My husband took one, and the man passed on. Mr. Mathews, finding himself refreshed by this, beckoned another man, who seemed in attendance, gave him the empty glass, and told him to fetch another ice. In due time the man returned, smiling and bowing as he presented the ice, and remained in waiting to take away the glass, which was given to him; and he

again disappeared. Presently he returned to the spot where Mr. Mathews had first seen him, and shortly afterwards a gentleman whom he knew went up to him and entered into familiar chat, as it seemed. Suddenly we saw our attendant take an opera hat (the fashion of that day) off a chair near him, and walk away arm-in-arm with his friend, for such he proved. In short, our supposed servant out of livery turned out to be Lord Tamworth, who saw through my husband's mistake, and good-naturedly humoured it.

I have sometimes thought that there is more propriety and meaning in costly apparel in the upper ranks than most people suppose, and that a gold-brocaded waistcoat upon a man of title or fashion carries a moral with it, for being too expensive to be purchased by a poor man, and too splendid in its effect to be tolerated in common life, the wearer must either have palpably a right to such a distinction, or suffer under the ridicule of aping his betters. Thus, the necessity of looking different from his superior precludes the temptation of imitating his habits of life.

During this summer "The Chip of the Old Block," written by his friend and brother actor (and successor in York), Mr. Knight ("Little Knight"), and adapted to what was a most delightful portion of his acting—namely, a half-tipsy droll*—was performed. Mr. Mathews was peculiarly happy in this style of character, and those who have seen his *Caleb Pipkin*, in the "May Queen" (one of the same class), and the gentleman-tipsiness of his *Bashful Man*, will allow that in every representation of inebriety he was perfect. Indeed, it was strange how completely he entered into every mood in which intoxication is to be found, certainly without any experience in his own person, and he never could endure the contemplation of it in another with any good humour.

His disgust of a drunken man was almost feminine, and any one who drank to excess habitually he never thoroughly esteemed, however worthy in other respects the person might seem to be. A very young man whom he knew had the unfortunate propensity of daily taking more wine than his brain could bear. Upon one occasion, after a Greenwich dinner, this person behaved so obstreperously in the carriage as the party returned to town, that he exceedingly annoyed his friends, and even gave them blows. Mr. Mathews, who was present, enlisted the other

* In this piece his celebrated "Nightingale Club," written for him by Mr. Colman, was first sung.

gentlemen in the coach in a plot to shame, if possible, the youthful offender out of this dreadful habit. It was agreed that he should be told the next morning that he had, during his overnight's paroxysm, beaten and injured my husband severely in the coach. Consequently, as soon as he heard this, the young man announced himself before Mr. Mathews was out of bed, who, upon hearing who his visitor was, got up and prepared himself in a manner that was quite extraordinary in so short a time, telling me not to seem surprised at what he would explain at leisure. He entered the room where the abashed visitor was in waiting to apologize for his behaviour, and the injuries he had inflicted. When he beheld my husband, he started back, as well he might, and almost groaned, so shocked was he at the dreadful state in which his friend appeared. Mr. Mathews had coloured his face as if bruised; but the additional expression of suffering which he contrived to throw into it was wonderful even to me, who was in the secret. Poor —— absolutely shed tears, walked about the room in all the agony of shame and remorse, declared he would never more exceed a reasonable quantity of the exasperating liquor, and retired a perfect penitent. Whether the amendment lasted, I am not aware, but it is certain that for a time this lesson had its effect upon him, and he was never undeceived. This was as fine a piece of my husband's acting as ever the public witnessed, and I regretted that it was confined to so small an audience. Poor —— went from London soon after, and we lost sight of him; but I have often reflected with confidence that this kindly-intentioned act of my husband might have saved him from destruction.

On the morning of the 13th of September, Mr. Walter Scott called in Lisle-street, to invite Mr. Mathews to an early dinner with him, to meet Lord Byron, at Long's Hotel. My husband had left home early on business previously to a journey he was about to make, and I told Mr. Scott that he was on the point of setting off that afternoon for Warwickshire, and that his place in the coach was taken. Mr. Scott expressed his vexation on a double account, first, that he could not see Mr. Mathews at dinner; next, that he had not been earlier aware of his intended journey, for that he had long wished to visit Kenilworth, and should have felt additional pleasure in doing so in his company. Mr. Scott asked me whether I thought my husband would forfeit his place in the coach, on condition that he left town with him in the evening, to post into Warwickshire. I ventured to promise that he would, and after turning over a portfolio of

engravings, and chatting over them for about half an hour, the charming man reminded me of his expectation of seeing my husband at the appointed dinner-hour, which, for some reason I now forget, was, I think, three o'clock. Just as Mr. Scott prepared to take his leave, I observed that it was pouring with rain, and that it was impossible he could go away without a coach. He smiled, and refused my offer of sending for one. I then pressed him to take an umbrella; but he declared he never considered any sort of weather an impediment to his moving about free from incumbrance of any kind. He was dressed oddly enough for London, in a dark green coatee, single-breasted, and fashioned, I thought, something like a Squire's hunting-jacket. His nether garments were drab-coloured, with continuations down to his shoes. Without further delay he departed, in the midst of what appeared to me little less than a torrent of rain, through which, leaning on a stout stick, he leisurely walked. As I stood at the window gazing after him as he proceeded down Leicester-place, he looked back with one of his fascinating smiles, and with a playful nod of his head, as if to reassure me that he was doing what was agreeable to him. I thought of the "Scotch mist," and tried to reconcile myself to the complete wetting which this pattern-Scott must have received long before he reached Bond-street.

When my husband returned, I need not say that he was charmed with the arrangement I had made for him. He had never seen Lord Byron, and the combined delight of meeting him in company with another great and remarkable man was such as, in hackneyed phrase, may be "better conceived than described." At a little before three o'clock, my husband took leave of me, proceeded to Long's, and after dinner started thence, with Mr. Walter Scott, and, I think, a nephew of his, also a Mr. Scott. On the third morning I received the following hurried despatch reporting progress—

To Mrs. Mathews.

Friday Morning, 10 o'clock, Sept. 15th, 1815.

I am now breakfasting at Stony Stratford. The man on the great horse arrived about six months back, after a tedious journey. I write to remind you to go to Covent Garden treasury for my salary, or they will forget to pay me, as of course I don't receive any after I quit. Delightful journey—Scott delicious. Introduced yesterday to Lord Byron at dinner—handsomest man I ever saw. Send the enclosed slip to Poole, directed to 36, Norfolk-street. God bless you.

C. Mathews.

The allusion to the "Man on the Great Horse," refers to an incident half serious, half comic, which some years before occurred to us in one of our midnight drives to the cottage already mentioned, at Colney-Hatch. As we slowly ascended Highgate Hill, a man upon one of the largest horses ever seen since the "Bishop's breed," intercepted our progress, with an evident intention of robbing us. He surveyed my husband as if measuring the probable chances of repulse and defence. Upon Mr. Mathews demanding his business, the man continued to look curiously into the headed chaise in which we were seated, with an intention, as we supposed, first to ascertain whether there was anything like fire-arms, next, whether he had more than one man to contend with. At this moment Mr. Decamp, who lived on Finchley Common, overtook us, and seeing the design of the stranger, called out, "Mathews, I've pistols, if you have not!" upon hearing which, the man on the "great horse" removed his position from our horse's head, and falteringly inquired, "Pray, gentlemen, is this the road to Stony Stratford?" This question caused a simultaneous laugh from the parties questioned; and the traveller was left to glean his information from the next sign-post on his road.

Of the dinner at Long's my husband ever after spoke with delight. Lord Byron was most fascinating; and this last meeting (as it proved) between these two splendid men, to which he was thus admitted, was always a subject of deep though melancholy gratification to him.

With regard to Lord Byron's features, Mr. Mathews observed, that he was the only man he ever contemplated, to whom he felt disposed to apply the word beautiful.

In his Lordship's letters to Mr. Moore from Italy, this party is mentioned; and Sir Walter Scott has also left a record, in his own writing, of this remarkable day, in the following form—

I saw Byron for the last time in 1815, after I returned from France. He dined or lunched with me at Long's, in Bond-street. I never saw him so full of gaiety and good humour; to which the presence of Mr. Mathews, the comedian, added not a little.*

Upon which Mr. Lockhart remarks—

"The only survivor (Mr. Scott) of the party, has recorded it in his note-book as the most interesting day he ever spent."

* See "The Scotsman," 1830; and recently, Mr. Lockhart's interesting life of his illustrious father-in-law.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Northampton, Tuesday, Sept. 19th, 1815.

I arrived safe and well at Leamington, on Friday, and when I saw the handful of houses that compose the town, I felt that Mr. Ling had hoaxed me, and much did I repent that I was advertised,—the anticipation was horrid; and no musician could I get far or near till seven o'clock, when one wretched country-dance fiddler arrived from a distance of five miles. I soon found that he could not play a note. I began my performance with an apology, stating that I had written forward to request that all the musicians in the town might be engaged, and that request had been complied with. "Ladies and gentlemen," said I, "strictly *all* that are to be found are now in the orchestra; *he* is all. I hope, however, that the defects of the singer may be compensated by the ability of the musician, and *vice versâ;* and if the kindness of the audience will but keep pace with our anxiety to please, my friend and I cannot fail of success." This produced a great laugh, and when we came to the first song, he in vain attempted to scratch a note or two, and he literally was not heard during the whole evening, except between the two acts, when, to rescue his fame, he boldly struck up a country-dance, which he rasped away to the no small amusement of the audience.

I had all the visitors, I believe, in the place; and, to my amazement, they produced me 27*l.* We* had the next day a most delightful treat, going all over Warwick Castle with Walter Scott. There, by accident, I met Mr. Hall, whom you may recollect at Perry's and Hill's, who was overjoyed at the luck of being introduced to Scotland's bard. He also was journeying northward. We went on to the celebrated ruins of Kenilworth, where we all dined; and I returned to Leamington. Mr. Hall took the third of a chaise with Simpson and myself on towards Derby, highly delighted at meeting with such post-chaise companions. On Sunday we had a charming journey of thirty miles to this place. I last night played *Buskin, Cypher,* and *Somno;* the house crammed, holds fifty, and we had fifty-six and a clear half, and expect as good to-night. At present, therefore, all is propitious; and it had need to be, for the misery I endured at rehearsal yesterday, and last night—oh! such pumps. To-night I do the Entertainment—such velvet after acting with them! To-morrow, Coventry.

C. Mathews.

On my husband's return home he described to me and others the effect Kenilworth produced upon Mr. Walter Scott, whose delight and enthusiasm led him to make several remarkable observations while surveying these splendid ruins, all which were indelibly impressed upon Mr. Mathews's memory; and if any evidence was then necessary to prove who the Great Unknown was, the fact of those very phrases, and the precise quotations

* Himself and a friend, who acted at the time as his travelling assistant.

appearing in the Romance when it was published, was enough to settle the point with those to whom they had been repeated.

But besides this an accidental disclosure had taken place at our own table, which established indisputably the fact of Mr. Scott being the author of the novels; but of which we were bound in honour, although not by any compact, to conceal our knowledge for some time.

One day, Messrs. John Ballantyne, Constable, and Terry, were dining with us, and during the dinner the Waverley novels had been the theme of conversation. Mr. John Ballantyne had an indiscreet vivacity sometimes, and moreover at this period felt a more than ordinary exhilaration from the "generous" and truth-telling wine, which prompted him to say, at the close of a speech he had made about some books for which I asked him, "I shall soon send you Scott's new novel!" I shall never forget the consternation of the Messrs. Constable and Terry, and, indeed, we were as much embarrassed. Mr. Constable looked daggers —and Terry used some—for with a stern brow and a correcting tone, he cried out "John!" adding with a growl, resembling what is generally made to check or reprove a mischievous dog,— "Ah! what are you about?" which made us drop our eyes in pain for the indiscreet tattler; while Wee Johnny looked like an impersonation of Fear,—startled "at the sound himself had made." Not another word was said; but our little good-natured friend's lapse was sacred with us, and the secret was never divulged while it was important to preserve it.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Stone, Staffordshire, Sept. 25th, 1815.

We have just arrived, after a delightful drive from Birmingham, forty miles, on our road to Manchester, where I am to give my Entertainments on Monday night. Our mode of travelling is most delightful; and we have not had one shower since we started from London. I have fagged very hard: have played already six nights, and shall play again six nights next week. Was on the stage at Northampton at half past-eleven o'clock on Tuesday; up at half-past five, Wednesday; went thirty-five miles to Coventry, and played that night. Found on my arrival a hall empty; not a seat, not a chandelier —no musicians—no nothing; and at a quarter before five I had not a prospect of being able to open. I went through every street of Coventry —to the mayor, to an alderman (for "Crazy"* was not to be found)— to carpenters, fiddlers; but, however, I mean to publish a small

* The name of a superannuated member of the corporation, in O'Keefe's farce of "Peeping Tom."

pamphlet with "More Miseries;" and that day's adventures will beat Beresford and Carr hollow. You can have no notion of my temper, my coolness, my perseverance; Simpson was astonished—hobbler as I am, I knocked him up: he could not follow me. At half-past seven I had a very elegant audience, all seated on about thirty long forms, dragged from a church; sixty candles in two chandeliers, dragged from the town-hall, a raised stage, branches, three music-stands, and three bad fiddlers, who could not play "God save the King" between them.* It was magic; and all went off well. Lots of "more miseries" on my arrival at Birmingham. Elliston, who left me on Thursday to go down, acted at Covent-garden on Friday, and only arrived yesterday. Such confusion, such madness, such misery; I was outrageous at him; but here again we got through. I concluded last night in "The Sleep Walker," with three cheers, and the little merry rascal supped with me, and my anger vanished. Would you believe it, I was not advertised till Wednesday, at ten o'clock, to perform that night. My tour is now regularly arranged. Wednesday, Sheffield; Thursday, Derby; Friday and Saturday, Leicester, with Macready; Sunday, I start for home. Pray, write me a letter by return. Direct it—Mr. Drewry, Printer, Derby. Don't fail, for it is a great delight to see your handwriting outside a letter, when I am full of puckers. God bless you and my dear boy! I am full of rude health and in excellent spirits. I am improved a month in my lameness since I left you, and always turn my toe in when I think of you, which I assure you is very, very often. Adieu!

C. MATHEWS.

Epitaphs found to-day at Pankridge:

Here lies a virgin pure,
Eat up with grief and fleas,
Unto a place of rest,
For her relief.

(*Literatim et verbatim.*)

A mild and dutiful son his here,
Likewise 2 tender infants dear;
So loving and obedient were
The children who lies reposing here.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Ashborn, Derbyshire, Sept. 29th, 1815.

Here we are, after a most delicious journey, through a most fertile and romantic country, from Manchester through Buxton, to this place; forty-four miles from the former, which we left this morning at seven.

* In other words, the simplest air.

I have one unexpected non-play night, which is almost the only chance I have of snatching an hour to tell you of my progress. I hope you will do me the justice to believe that I am never disposed to neglect an opportunity of writing to you. The fag I have had on this expedition is not to be imagined. However, I am still, like Wilson the pedestrian, in excellent strength, and confident of completing my undertaking. On my return, I can say that I have played eleven nights, and travelled nearly five hundred miles, in a fortnight. You and I agreed, you will remember, that 200*l.* (considering the hurry and want of organization of my scheme), would be a good sum to bring home, remembering the extra expense of Simpson's journeys to and from Northampton, my posting to Leamington, &c. Up to this morning, putting all down, I clear 225*l.*! and have yet Derby to-morrow, and two nights at Leicester (but there I only share with Macready); so I think that I have done nobly.

The weather, which has been so propitious during our travelling here, was most unfortunate for my benefit night at Birmingham, and Manchester last night, raining torrents. Last night it hurt me much. I could not resist relating to you what I consider, under all circumstances, "Prodigious!" I direct this to town, to request that you will write, to inform me of the play on Monday, and if they act on Tuesday, and what. If I play on Monday, I can be there easily in time; but would prefer, for the horse's sake, to reach town on Tuesday morning; however, as my furlough expires on Saturday, I must expect to act on Monday.

CHARLES MATHEWS.

Mrs. Mathews, Lisle-street, Leicester-square.

In November, another command from her Majesty, to perform to her at Windsor Castle, most graciously worded, reached Mr. Mathews, who again was unable to attend the summons, made through Lieutenant-Colonel Stephenson.

CHAPTER XX.

Mr. Mathews at the Haymarket Theatre—Unnecessary offers of assistance—Letter to Mrs. Mathews from Worthing—Unintentional compliment—Methodistical playgoers—Visit to France by Mr. Mathews and Mr. Yates—Mr. Mathews's engagement with Mr. Arnold—His visit to Paris with that gentleman—Letter to Mrs. Mathews from Paris—Tiercelin, Brunet, and Potier—Invitation to Mr. Mathews's "At Home"—Programme of the entertainment—Mr. Mathews's introductory address—Extraordinary success of the speculation—Mr. Mathews's sudden illness—Mr. Arnold and his bond—Amelioration of the agreement—Distressing malady.

On the 17th of June, 1817, Mr. Mathews's dramatic idol, John Kemble, took his leave of the public. It was an affecting evening, although in a great measure gratifying to his friends and admirers. After the curtain dropped upon his last bow, a relic of this great ornament to his profession was eagerly sought by all who crowded round the "last of all the Romans." He presented the sandals he had worn that night in *Coriolanus*, to my husband, who exclaimed, as he bore away his prize, "I may wear his sandals, but no one will ever stand in his shoes."

On the 27th a public farewell-dinner was given to Mr. Kemble. Lord Holland took the head of the table, and on his right hand sat the object of the meeting; on his left the Duke of Bedford. Messrs. Young, C. Kemble, and Mathews, presided at the other tables. After the presentation of a splendid vase, prepared by some of his admirers, an ode was recited by Mr. Young, from the pen of Campbell, the Bard of Hope. Lord Holland then proposed "the health of Mr. Mathews (at the same time proclaiming him to have been the suggester as well as promoter of the compliment to Mr. Kemble), and the Committee," which distinction was acknowledged by Mr. Mathews in an appropriate speech.

The Haymarket season, which commenced this year on the 7th of July, brought Mr. Mathews once more before a summer audience in London, after an absence of two years. He made his appearance in *Scout*, in "The Village Lawyer," one of those

unique performances not to be described, and the enthusiasm with which he was hailed is equally indescribable.

It seems strange, that whenever an individual attempt is successfully made, a general desire should be created to imitate the plan, whether with or without ability or means. What is still more strange, however, is, that when it is clearly manifest that individuality has constituted the pith and charm of the enterprise, people not without judgment in other respects, should propose to nullify this success by offering their co-operation, forgetting that it is the very popularity of the plan, the basis of which they would thus infallibly upset, which has induced them to make this offer.

As soon as Mr. Mathews proved his singular power in his "At Homes," and that he could attract overflowing audiences, without any personal assistance, he was assailed by proposals of all sorts, from all sorts of people, to be admitted into his entertainment. When he was performing in Dublin to crowded houses, a conjuror, then exhibiting there to almost empty benches, wrote to him, absurdly offering him his "services," upon the consideration of receiving an "equal share of Mr. Mathews's profits."

All such proposals, of course, were declined, but not in a solitary instance without giving great offence to the applicants.

At the close of the Haymarket season, Mr. Mathews resumed his provincial pursuits and his correspondence with myself.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Worthing, October 1st, 1817.

I am just arrived here, and shall stay till Sunday. My benefit last night produced 105*l.* making my profits since last Wednesday, 140*l.*; so I have got beyond the right reading. This is 40*l.* beyond my most sanguine guess.

I must tell you a "little anecdote," which is the greatest compliment that I ever received. During my performance at Brighton, Mrs. George Farren's mother and sister went to see me "At Home;" the former was so disgusted at my "imposition on the public," that she actually left the house at the end of the ventriloquy, and dragged her daughter with her. She said it ought to be exposed in the public papers, for that she saw the man under the stage give me up the wine, —and that people could be such fools as to believe I spoke for that child, and the old man, so provoked her, that she would not stay to be one of them.

I patronise your plan with Charles. Tell him that I am fagging at French myself now.

C. Mathews.

Southampton, October 11th, 1817.

The whole of yesterday I was absent on a trip to the Isle of Wight, and most delightful it was. An old friend, a Mr. Lynn, took me over in his yacht; we returned and dined aboard, and got home in the evening.

I have received great attention here. Mrs. Siddons's friend, Mrs. Fitzhugh, called on me. One morning, to my great amazement, I saw a procession of about eight persons enter my drawing-room, my bedroom door being open; and when I entered, I perceived Mr. Cooke the Methodist clergyman, and family, and other regular bred Methodists of the town. Think of that!

C. Mathews.

Mr. Cooke was one of those well-educated and liberal Christians who recommend religion by their own example; too sincere in himself to suppose it necessary to be always talking goodness to others, and too well-bred and feeling to insult those he might find less excellent than himself. Several like him, whom I used to meet in my husband's family, were alone sufficient to redeem a whole conventicle of Mawworms. I well remember a Northamptonshire preacher who always came up to London when Mrs. Siddons and John Kemble performed, for the pleasure of hearing them. He admitted to me, that this was unknown to his connexion, but he saw no impropriety in such a gratification; still, he had no right, he said, to shock the prejudices of his sect by thus proclaiming his opinion of their narrowness of mind. On the occasions of the "At Homes," however, many of Mr. Mathews's family connexions were followers of his "Lectures," and did not hesitate to acquaint themselves with the inside of a theatre to hear their old friend's son "hold forth," to whom it would otherwise have been unknown: these were always observed to be amongst the most delighted of the audience.

Pursuant to an arrangement made with Mr. Yates,* Mr.

* Frederic Henry Yates, comedian, born in London 1797, educated at Charter-house, and intended for the army. Entered the Commissariat, and was engaged during the last years of the Peninsular War. Tired of inactivity, after the battle of Waterloo he embraced the dramatic profession, for which he had always evinced a strong predilection. He acted for some time, both at Drury-lane and Covent-garden, but it was not until he became part proprietor and manager of the Adelphi that his talents were fully appreciated. Under his *régime*, this little theatre established a *spécialité* for melodramas and farces which rendered it one of the most favourite resorts of the day. His exertions were ably seconded by his wife, the daughter of Mr. Brunton, a well-known provincial manager and actor. Mr. Yates died in June, 1842, from the bursting of a bloodvessel in the chest, caused by over-exertion, at the early age of forty-five.

Mathews visited France, for the first time, towards the close of this year. The plan was, to perform the "Actor of all Work," wherever the English were deemed numerous enough to make up an audience commensurate with his views. Mr. Yates was to perform "the manager," not only in the above piece, but in all things else where Mr. Mathews found himself in want of an assistant.

Mr. Yates was at this time young upon the stage, but gave promise of the superior talents he has since matured. He was a most agreeable companion, and a great favourite with Mr. Mathews, while his acquaintance with French customs, and English officers stationed abroad—from his knowledge of them while a youth in the commissariat department—rendered him a more than commonly desirable fellow-traveller on such an expedition.

On their return to England, Mr. Mathews separated from Mr. Yates, professionally, as will be seen by his letters descriptive of his visit to Scotland, where Mr. Yates was, I believe, engaged as a tragedian.

To Mr. Arnold of the Lyceum Theatre belonged the judgment to perceive the advantage to be derived from the individual exertions of Mr. Mathews. Mr. Arnold's discrimination and shrewdness led to the conclusion, which Mr. Mathews had never calculated upon to any such extent; indeed, he was ill at calculation in any shape. Mr. Arnold had, in fact, prudently laid by for the time, which he saw approaching, from my husband's evident dissatisfaction with the winter theatres; and when it came, promptly offered him a remedy for present discontent, and a security from similar mortification in future. Briefly, Mr. Arnold proposed to buy up for a term of years Mr. Mathews's talents, and to become sole master and comptroller of them; to take all chances and risks; and, what was most tempting to my husband, all the trouble! Strange to say, Mr. Mathews thought he could be satisfied and happy under such a servitude. But he had a bad head for business: and Mr. Arnold enjoined secrecy; even I was not to be admitted into their conferences; and all was listened to on the one side without any clear understanding of his obligations. The income, and the employment of his powers, were all, as it afterwards proved, that Mr. Mathews retained of the conditions. He was disgusted with his late position, and, what he could not but feel, the injustice of the winter managers. He panted for freedom, fancied it was now offered to him, and heedlessly rushed into tenfold captivity.

When too late for objection or interference, I was told what he had done: sold himself for the most valuable part of his public life to a person who originally, by his objectionable management of the Lyceum in 1810 (as Mr. Mathews conceived it), drove him from London; but, under his present excitement against others, all this had been overlooked or forgotten. Reproaches on my part would have been as useless as kind; the arrangement was made, and, as far as honour was concerned, past recall; he had pledged his word to Mr. Arnold. A trivial circumstance recurred to me, and was now explained, which at the time caused me a slight surprise and some offence. It was on the first appointment (as it afterwards appeared) made by the parties. I had engaged, by my husband's wish, to accompany some friends to a concert: he refused to go; the carriage was late, and Mr. Arnold was punctual. I wondered at his call at such an hour, especially as no intimacy subsisted. He fixed his eyes upon the lights in the room for a moment, and taking a pinch of snuff, as if out of humour, asked, or rather exclaimed, in a sharp tone, "What! do you burn wax candles?—a great extravagance!" I started at the liberty I conceived he took, without answering him. "A feather will show which way the wind blows." Our future master was calculating, that with the reductions his plan would require in our mode of living, it would be necessary to give up all refinements.

As soon as I was assured that the matter was irrevocably determined upon, and that my husband's time, previously to the arrangement coming into action, was to be spent in a tour, I persuaded him to let me begin our contracted system at once, to give up our little carriage and servants, and allow me to take a small furnished cottage near my boy's school, at least till the result of Mr. Arnold's experiment was ascertained, which was to take place in the spring of the next year. In agreement with this proposal, I removed from Lisle-street to the Clapham-road cottage. Having settled all preliminaries for commencing the new scheme, Mr. Arnold and my husband made a short visit to Paris, where Mr. Mathews had never been.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Paris, March 12th, 1818.

I arrived here safely yesterday, and as soon as we had dined, went with Poole, who found us out within an hour of our arrival, to the Theatre des Variétés, where I saw three of the finest actors I have ever beheld, Tiercelin, Brunet, and Potier.

To-day we have been walking about to see the palaces and principal

public buildings. You have heard so much from various visitors, who are naturally full of communication upon these topics, that it is not possible I can say anything new. I am lost in wonder. The Tuileries' palace and gardens, and all the better parts of this most magnificent city, far exceed my most sanguine expectation; the immense population, and the extraordinary "gigs" that are to be encountered at every corner, keep both eyes in a constant rotatory motion, and all the risible faculties in unceasing exertion. The most public walks, particularly those of the Palais Royal, being a mixture of Exeter Change and Vauxhall Gardens on a gala night, present such a ridiculous mixture of character and costume, that you cannot divest your mind of the idea that they are walking in masquerade dresses. I have seen one hundred men to-day exactly like the mask Liston wore at Charles Kemble's; and the coal-scuttle Grimaldi wore in the pantomime is no caricature of the women's head-dresses. We saw Gavaudan, whom Poole described as a most enchanting comic actress. One scene excelled anything I have seen in England, as far as Covent Garden excels Drury-lane. Potier convulsed me with laughter; his face is a very comic consumptive likeness of Young in "The Stranger;" and he played *Werter* in burlesque.

Arnold and I had a dinner to-day of three dishes—a bottle of claret, and another of burgundy; and our bill was 8*s.* 2*d.* English.

C. Mathews.

P.S.—I dine to-day at Talma's.

Toward the end of March the following simple announcement heralded Mr. Mathews's first attempt to face the town single-handed.

The public are respectfully informed that Mr. Mathews will be "At Home," at the Theatre Royal English Opera House, on the 2nd, 4th, 6th, 7th, 9th, and 11th of April. Particulars of the Entertainments to which the Public are invited will be duly announced.

The title given to this "invitation" was a most felicitous one as it turned out, but was undoubtedly open to many critical taunts, had the entertainment happened to be less fortunate. The public expectation was strongly excited; the house was filled at an early hour; and the following bill, delivered at the entrance, was eagerly perused during the overture, performed by one musician on a pianoforte placed on one side of the stage. The preparations that met the eye of the expectants were simply a drawing-room scene, a small table covered with a green cloth, a chair behind it, and a lamp placed at either end. Without further appliances, or means of dramatic effect, the performer came forward in his private dress, as he would have entered any evening party. His reception was enthusiastic. The following is a copy of the bill:—

Theatre Royal English Opera House, Strand.

The public are respectfully informed, that they will find Mr. Mathews "At Home," this evening, Thursday, April 2nd, 1818; Saturday the 4th, and on the Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday following, when he will have the honour of presenting his visitors with an Entertainment called

MAIL-COACH ADVENTURES.

Affording an introduction for various comic songs, imitations, &c. Previous to which he will address the company on the subject of his present attempt.

PART FIRST.

Recitation—Introductory Address, general improvement in the conveyance of live lumber, as exemplified in the progress of heavy coach, light coach, caterpillar, and mail.—Whimsical description of an expedition to Brentford.

Song—Mail-coach.

Recitation—Description of the passengers.—Lisping Lady and Critic in Black.

Song—Royal Visitors.

Recitation—Breaking of a spring.—Passengers at Highgate.—Literary Butcher.—Socrates in the Shambles.—Definition of Belles Lettres.—French Poets.—Rhyming defended.

Song—Cobbler à la Francaise.

Recitation—Theatrical conversation.—Dimensions of Drury-lane and Covent Garden stages.—Matter-of-fact conversation; satire on truisms.

Song—Incontrovertible Facts in various branches of Knowledge.

PART SECOND.

Mr. Mathews will deliver an Experimental Lecture on Ventriloquy.

PART THIRD.

Recitation—Digression on the study of the Law: whimsical trial, Goody Grim *versus* Lapstone.—Scramble at Supper.—Drunken Farmer.—Extract from Hippisley's drunken man.

Song—London Newspapers.

Recitation—Imitation of Fond Barney of York.—Arrival of a Scotch Lady.—Long story about nothing.

Song—Bartholomew Fair.

Recitation—A Quack Doctor.—Mountebank's harangue.—Anecdote of a Yorkshireman.

Song—The Nightingale Club.

The Entertainment to conclude with novel specimens of Imitation, in which several tragic and comic performers will give their different ideas how "Hamlet's advice to the Players" should be spoken.

Of this first attempt, the notices published at the time contain a more perfect account than any I could now give. This first performance, though composed of materials which had been presented to the public during the previous ten years, was hailed in a collected form with extraordinary delight, and its success may be considered a greater triumph of his skill and versatile powers than all he afterwards did, even with the advantage of novelty. The following was Mr. Mathews's Introductory Address :—

Ladies and Gentlemen,—Appearing before you in this novel way, it will naturally be expected that I should give some explanation of the motive that has induced me to make so bold an attempt as that of offering you a whole evening's entertainment by my own individual exertions. It is simply this :—public approbation has long since flattered me into the belief, that I have some pretensions to the title of a comic actor. The vanity of mankind is easily roused by the encouragement of popular applause; and I am not aware that actors, though *proverbially modest*, are more exempt from vanity than patriots and statesmen. Fully gratified in this particular, it has therefore been my highest ambition to appear before you in the legitimate shape of a regular comedian. Circumstances, however, which I could neither control nor account for, have deprived me of the opportunity of so doing. In the meantime, I have been frequently urged by my friends to attempt an entertainment by myself, and reminded with what success the celebrated Dibdin had, during several winters, kept audiences together by his single exertions. Still I preferred the exercise of my profession as a member of the national theatre; and could I have been indulged in the first wish of my heart, that of appearing frequently before you in characters of legitimate comedy, in that capacity I should, probably, have remained to the end of my days, without ever attempting to exhibit that little knack for distinct mimicry to which I since have unfortunately been exclusively doomed.

In the latter part of my last winter's engagement it became evident to me, that all hopes of attaining my favourite object were at an end. I scarcely ever had the opportunity of appearing before you but in characters solely devoted to the peculiarities of mimicry. The press, perhaps unconsciously, took its tone from the managers; and a part of it (I do not say the whole, for I should be ungrateful if I did), but a part fell into the habit of designating me as a mere mimic, and no actor. It will, however, be observed, that the best authorities have characterized the drama by the title of the mimic art; and I humbly conceive, that, without mimicry, there can be no acting. It is the very essence of personation, and he who cannot personate the character imagined by an author, in my mind can never be an actor. If this argument, which I have presumed to advance, be admitted, it is surely a strange deduction, that a man ceases to be an actor because he personates half a dozen characters in a drama instead of one. Be this

as it may, such has been the opinion given in my particular case. The public naturally supposed the peculiarities of my cast of characters to be my own taste. I therefore hope I shall be excused for taking this my only opportunity of avowing my firm attachment to that legitimate drama of the country, which I devoutly hope may one day be restored to us.

I trust it is clearly understood, that I have spoken not of motives, but of effects. I have not the slightest disposition to attribute my treatment to any illiberal feeling: it was probably accidental; but the facts are undeniable, and the results to me the same as if they had been premeditated. During the last season, which consisted of two hundred and thirty-nine nights, I had only the opportunity of appearing forty-six, and not once in a character in a comedy. It is true that twelve nights of those forty-six I rode one of the finest horses the stud of the theatre could afford;* but even this, though I certainly was exalted by it, did not satisfy my ambition. During the rest of the time, to make use of a theatrical term, I was laid upon the shelf; but I was too fond of my profession and public applause to lie quietly there. I grew restless and fidgetty, and like a good soldier, who feels he has not yet done half his duty, whenever I peeped from my uneasy quarters, and saw a muster of the dramatic corps,

My soul was in arms, and eager for the fray;

in which I might prove my zeal and my devotion in your service. But this was not permitted. At length I suspected my services were not required at all; and therefore, "Like a well-bred dog who walks quietly down stairs when he sees violent preparations on foot for kicking him into the street," I followed the example of my betters, and resigned, rather than run the risk of staying to be turned out. I retired. It was my own act. I complain of no one. I only assert my right to make use of whatever talent may have been bestowed on me to the best advantage to myself: for if I can only be allowed to exhibit those talents in a national theatre, which I once wished to be confined to the amusement of my private friends; if I cannot be allowed my chance, like other actors, in the usual way; if the regular practitioners will drive me to quackery, why I will sell my medicines on my own account, and they shall call me mountebank, if they like; but if such I am, like one, I will have a stage to myself. My vanity, if they please, has led me to make the attempt. It is a bold one, but the encouragement is in your hands. If I can stand single-handed against the hosts of superior entertainment by which I am surrounded, it will be a feather in my cap. It is in your power to place the feather there; and if it is once planted, be assured it shall be worn gratefully, as well as triumphantly. I feel, however, considerable anxiety for the result, and unaffectedly acknowledge my fearful diffidence of my own abilities.

* Mr. Harris had introduced horses into the drama of "Lodoiska," in which Mr. Mathews performed *Varbel*.

The difficulties of my task are so numerous and obvious, that were I a stranger in the land, I should abandon it to despair; but when I look round me, and reflect on the numerous instances of kindness I have received, gratitude for past favours, and zeal to merit new ones, conspire to banish those apprehensions which an undertaking like mine had so naturally excited; and I enter on my task without more apology, or further adding to a preface which, I fear, has already too long encroached upon your patience.

This was, indeed, an unprecedented instance of individual success. The crowds that nightly flocked to witness the performance seemed scarcely to lessen the number of hourly applicants for places: not a day passed without many private entreaties from persons who were disappointed in procuring places at the box-office to Mr. Mathews, to contrive that they should be accommodated, as if the theatre had been elastic, and could be stretched at pleasure for their gratification. Innumerable letters from all ranks of persons were addressed to my husband to obtain admittance. The following owes its preservation to its being kept as an autograph of a celebrated person :—

24, Bury-street, St. James's, Tuesday, April 30th, 1818.

My dear Sir,—I am here but for a short time, and have set apart Thursday for the very great treat of hearing you at the Lyceum; but as they tell me it will be next to impossible to find places without having before secured a box, I presume so far on my acquaintance with you as to beg your interest for three seats somewhere. My friend, Mr. Irving (the author of "The Sketch-Book") is one of those that accompany me.

Yours very truly, Thomas Moore.

Here, then, was the result of Mr. Arnold's calculation. For my own part, I felt stunned with the blow, for such it seemed to our future happiness. The wondrous success of the night spoke loudly to me of my husband's imprudence and precipitancy; and while our friends came one after another to my box to congratulate me, and bring me cheering messages from others, I hardly knew how to separate my real satisfaction at the popularity of Mr. Mathews from the depressing recollection that the most solid result of his success was for the benefit almost of a stranger; and when I greeted him, upon our return home, it would have been curious to an observer to see our manner to each other, which might have been said to resemble the twofold expression of the ingenious French grimacer, the one half of whose face laughed while the other cried. This was really the case

with our feelings, for we rejoiced and mourned at one and the same time.

However, we agreed to remain in our little cottage, and tried to be content. The next day Mr. Mathews felt ill; but he rallied, and reappeared a second night, with the same results. He came home sick and feverish: but again and again he performed his task, and the appetite of the town seemed to grow "by what it fed on;" the demand for places nightly exceeded the number to be obtained; and Mr. Arnold's anxiety naturally augmented at this extraordinary popularity of his project, lest it should be known that he was the principal gainer by it; and he cautioned me frequently not to betray the secret, for, as he suggested, it was possible that the public would feel disappointed to find Mr. Mathews not the principal person benefited by his performance. All this was painful, and bitterly did we feel the numerous congratulations we received upon the speedy fortune that must accrue from such a source. Mr. Mathews, however, resolutely went on, ill as he felt, determined to abide the result of his own rashness, reasonably and honourably reflecting, that, as Mr. Arnold had taken all the risk, he had fairly a right to the profit arising from the success of his speculation.

It was my original intention, as it was my earnest wish, to remain silent upon the subject of Mr. Mathews's engagement to Mr. Arnold; for to touch upon it even slightly was a very painful effort to me on many accounts, and I should have passed over the whole transaction, had it not been pointed out to me as a duty to the memory of my husband, paramount to every other consideration, to confute the universal belief of his having made a prodigious sum of money in this the first, and the six following seasons, of his "At Homes." This was a very natural impression, from the well-known great receipts consequent upon the performance. At the period of which I speak, while he was receiving the congratulations of all his friends at the rapid fortune he was accumulating, he was inwardly regretting the too humble estimate of his own powers, which had led him into the mistake of binding himself as a servant where he ought to have been the master. When Mr. Mathews first stood singly before the public —when the building in which he performed almost groaned under the weight of spectators—when he who attracted them was supposed by his individual merit, his unremitting mental and bodily toil, to be receiving a proportionate reward for his unparalleled exertions, he was, in fact, a poorer man than he had found himself for many years.

I shall content myself with this assertion: the evidences are in my possession, and I earnestly desire to commit them to oblivion; but I cannot forget the deep anguish my dear husband felt for his incautious, unadvised precipitancy, in devoting to another what he too late felt should have chiefly benefited his family, for he thought not of himself. He repented the step for ever afterwards, although he never suffered his bad bargain to lead him willingly into any neglect of the interest of the person whose fortune he was making during the long period he was so bound. It was harassing, however, to find his means constantly overrated, for the fallacy of his enormous receipts affected him in various ways during the rest of his life; he was always, therefore, annoyed when told of his vast possessions, for he was said to be worth more money than he ever earned.* In this extravagant estimate of his riches, no allowance was thought of for his living, the education of his son, and other necessary as well as incidental expenses. The simple fact of his standing alone before the public for so many years, naturally enough led to this false conclusion; but those who held up their hands with admiration at the immense fortune he was making, were unacquainted with the main fact of his situation with Mr. Arnold, and the requisite expenses and drawbacks that attended his individual performances, when he travelled for his own profit. When he made a tour in the provinces his expenses were excessive; he was compelled to take assistants, servants, carriages, machinery, pianoforte, wardrobe, &c.; and when he could not spare time to travel with his own horses (a not inexpensive plan), he had ruinous posting to pay. Inn bills were of no trivial amount for four persons (himself, his managing man, musician, and servant); hiring and preparing rooms and theatres, with their appendages, demanded a heavy disbursement, for advantage was taken, under the dishonest reckoning that his superior receipts warranted every encroachment upon them; when other applicants were charged five guineas for a room or a theatre, Mr. Mathews was frequently required to pay twelve or fourteen. I remember as an instance of this, that once when his managing man went forward to secure a small theatre for his performance, the demand was three guineas per night for its use; but, upon being made acquainted for whom it was to be engaged, he was immediately informed by the agent that when Mr. ——, the proprietor, left

* In more than one instance he was said to possess a "plum."

orders for letting it, he desired that should Mr. Mathews happen to apply, it must not be let to him under nine !*

But to return. One day a gentleman who was on habits of great intimacy with my husband, finding his hearty congratulations upon his prospect of realising a speedy fortune produce no satisfaction, suspected that something was withheld which rendered them unwelcome; and feeling a real interest in the prosperity of our family, he at length drew a confidential admission of discontent, and a partial revelation of the circumstances in which he was placed. He then delivered up to his legal friend's investigation the heart of his mystery, by producing the fatal parchment; and, strange to say, from this accidental inspection Mr. Mathews first became thoroughly acquainted with the whole extent of his obligations. I have no apology to offer for a manifest and censurable indiscretion, but my husband's inborn and unfortunate hatred to the formalities of business. In the present case, when the time arrived for final settlement, he did not feel the necessity of inspecting the document offered to his scrutiny —but rashly and hastily affixed his name to it—impatient to enter a chaise then waiting to convey him to Dover, and into which he hastened with his future master in high spirits; and away went the fettered slave, without considering the weight and quality of his chains, or how they were calculated to oppress and gall him when in action.

The terms of this document, its pains and penalties, reduced my husband to the very verge of frenzy when they were made clear to him by his legal friend, whose judgment and advice in the first instance, had not the secrecy been the basis of the negotiation, must have preserved him from this enthralment. The extent of his imprudence and misfortune then reached his comprehension, and despair seized upon every faculty. It was in vain that he had resolved on performing his duty to his employer—he had not till now an idea of its extent. He knew he had resigned the greater part of his profits to another, but he had no understanding of what was exacted besides. Indeed the clauses that existed in this bond were of the most extraordinary nature. By one of them it was required that my husband should not only work all the year round for Mr. Arnold, but be subservient to his discretionary power to command him to go to any part of

* The proprietor of a large room at Worcester once wrote to Mr. Mathews to come there and perform, and offered him his place and one-fifth of the receipts for his performance. This application was almost too impudent, even to laugh at.

Great Britain, Ireland, or the Continent, he chose to specify, and to exert his talents wheresoever, and in whatever manner, Mr. Arnold conceived it expedient to his own interest to command their exercise. In another part it was insisted that upon any occasion of absence or failure of his expected performance, or from whatever cause (personal illness excepted), Mr. Mathews was on each and every omission to forfeit the sum of two hundred pounds; so that the inference was, that in the event of any family affliction, the loss of wife, child, or any other calamity, it was not to interfere with his duty to his master.

In short, the reading of the parchment acted like a stroke of thunder upon my husband; he had, as I have said, been suffering from the effects of his unusual fatigue, and the reflections which would obtrude, in spite of himself, upon his mistaken estimate of his own strength with the public; his conviction, from his present suffering, that his laborious undertaking, pursued too under such harassing control, without intermission, for a series of years, would seriously affect his health, and probably cause him to leave his family unprovided for, before he was allowed opportunity of exerting himself independently of his duty to Mr. Arnold; these considerations, added to the shock of this iron manacle, of which he now felt the entire pressure for the first time, caused a delirium to seize upon him, and he was put to bed at a friend's house in town, utterly incapacitated from all further thought or action.

On the first intimation of his situation and inability to perform, a medical gentleman, a stranger to us, called "from Mr. Arnold, to examine into Mr. Mathews's state of health!" He found my husband somewhat better as to bodily ailment, but in that state of mental prostration, that it must have been clear to the physician that his patient was quite unfitted for the required task; but his office was to pronounce whether bodily disease was the cause of the non-performance of his engagement. Immediately after his report, Mr. Arnold sent in a legal demand for 200*l.*, which demand was repeated on every occasion of failure on the appointed night to appear at the English Opera House. At these aggravating results of his position the delirium returned; in vain were Mr. Arnold's forfeitures—my poor husband's mind was overthrown, and mine little less distracted. Mr. Arnold at length, by my desire, came himself in order to examine into the fact of my husband's disability to obey his wishes, and he then saw the utter folly of expecting the sufferer to return to his duties. Our friends gathered around us; a

party of them visited and conferred with Mr. Arnold, and gradually induced him to admit the necessity as well as policy of waiving in part the hard conditions of his bond; for the question was whether he should relax a little, and resign a part, rather than by his tenacity destroy the whole of the golden harvest he had sowed. My husband's friends were strenuously persevering, and pointed out that, unless Mr. Arnold did something that would allow my husband to prosecute his duties with a more tranquil feeling, it must end in the defeat of his own hopes altogether. He was induced to listen to self-interest. Certain conditions were then rescinded, others modified, and the pecuniary severity of the agreement ameliorated. Mr. Arnold's claims upon the personal exertions of my husband were confined to London, leaving him the other months to work out his time for his own exclusive profit in the provinces.

Another agreement was made out, in which their mutual obligations were to be limited to seven seasons, Mr. Mathews being at liberty, as I have said, to perform in the country at the annual close of his London "At Home." This partial release, when made clear, acted gradually and in a salutary manner upon my husband's mind and returning health; he was able to resume his public duties soon after, and from that moment he proceeded cheerfully and zealously to perform his undertaking. Only a few intimate friends—those who had exerted themselves to bring about this alleviation to his bondage, knew the real cause of the interruption of his performance. Mr. Mathews never met Mr. Arnold, or communicated with him during the time of discontent, nor, I believe, did they ever, at any time during their future knowledge of each other, revert to the painful subject. My husband went steadily on without shrinking from his task, or showing the least ill-will towards his task-master. Neither was he ever known to obtrude his natural regrets upon any one, that he had given up the best part of his life to enrich another.*

* It has been suggested to me, since the publication of this work, that I ought to state the pecuniary conditions of this engagement (especially as, in one instance, they have been misrepresented); I therefore add them for the satisfaction of those who may find themselves interested in such particulars.

By the original bond, Mr. Arnold pledged himself to pay Mr. Mathews 1000*l.* a year for life (liable to the deductions mentioned), on condition of Mr. Mathews exerting his talents in any manner or place dictated by Mr. Arnold, four times every week for seven years. An undertaking which, judging from the first effects upon his health, and considering the constant and regular call upon his strength exacted by his employer, all the year round, would probably

In a few weeks after these harassing struggles, my husband found an occasional inconvenience that he had lately felt, augmented to a most serious disorder, from which his eventual sufferings were truly pitiable. I can only describe it by saying that it showed itself in deep cracks across his tongue. Every advice was sought and attended to; but it baffled first-rate skill and experience. It sometimes prevented him from eating, and banished sleep, and had he not been resolute in the prosecution of his duty, he must have declared it (as his medical men did) impossible to use it professionally. Every word he uttered was like a drop of aquafortis upon these cracks. It was distressing to know his exertions under such torture—and, oh! how painful now to remember them. This complaint had in turn been pronounced to be stomach and local fever, caused by anxiety and his great professional exertions. Some days it was better, at others worse, according to the use made of his voice; but it was always in a state which would have warranted him in declaring acting too painful to be attempted; still he persevered, and it was heart-touching to witness his sufferings on his return home from the exertion. On the days of performance he often found it requisite to preserve a total silence until he began his "Entertainment," when he described his sensations to be like what he must be supposed to feel while talking and singing with a piece of red-hot iron attached to his tongue.

have limited Mr. Arnold's responsibility to the term of his own receipts. Assuredly Mr. Mathews always felt occasional rest indispensable from his uncommon exertions, and, but for such intervals, his constitution must have failed much earlier than it did.

By the second agreement, Mr. Arnold took to himself the first forty pounds of every night's receipt, after which he shared equally the remainder of it with Mr. Mathews, who was required, out of the sum paid to him, to contribute an equal part with Mr. Arnold, to the cost of authorship, dresses, scenery, and other incidental expenses.

Mr. Arnold, it was calculated, made by this speculation thirty thousand pounds, independently of after arrangements with Mr. Mathews, also of a highly lucrative nature.

CHAPTER XXI.

Journey to Liverpool—Incidents on the road—Letter to Mrs. Mathews—Reception of Mr. Mathews by his friends at Swansea—Visit to Mr. and Mrs. Rolls at Briton Ferry—Letters to Mrs. Mathews.

At the close of the first season of his "At Home," at the English Opera House—the painful disorder in Mr. Mathews's tongue being in a slight degree alleviated—he again set forth for the provinces, eager to remedy the past by continued exertions throughout the hot weather, when he ought, in reason, to have taken rest and recreation from the severe anxiety and toil of his late engagement. He had, however, to pay the hard penalty of the mistake he had committed, and he unhesitatingly determined to forego personal ease to "atone," as he said, "to his wife and child for having so rashly given away their rights." His fault was more than expiated by the penance, even had it been of a nature less pardonable—home and its comfort exchanged for every possible annoyance, and fatigue both of body and mind, were surely punishment enough for much more than is expressed by the words imprudent precipitancy.

One of his first letters, after he quitted London, will give some idea of his wearisome pilgrimage, and his persevering and even cheerful endurance of the ills he encountered in his way.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Liverpool, July 13th, 1818.

Here I am safely arrived, after one of the most uncomfortable journeys I have ever encountered, at least from the time I parted with Simpson. Lots of miseries!

The first pleasing intelligence we received was in a small town at which we breakfasted on Saturday morning. The ostler, on looking at our horse, observed, that he should almost have thought it was the same horse that had been there the day before. On inquiry, he had seen George; and on the question being put to him as to what time he passed through, &c., he replied, "Ah, sir, the young man had a shocking accident! The horse fell down with him; he rolled over his head, and

he has cut the horse's knees sadly." At Stratford we found George affecting the gay, and flattering himself that we should not examine the horse. Our friend had, however, exaggerated the matter; for though the horse had been down, the injury was very trifling.

We drove him on to Coventry that night; got up early to be ready by the Liverpool mail: at eight it arrived. Sent up to know if there was a place—man returned—yes, sir, one place outside. Sent my portmanteau, gobbled breakfast—presently saw man return with my portmanteau—smelt a misery. Bookkeeper had just discovered that the place had been promised to a gentleman the night before. No other coach to Liverpool that day; set off on a mere scent of a coach to Birmingham, per gig; tired horse; eighteen miles—drove very fast to get there by twelve: heard there was no coach till four; obliged to make up my mind to go by that. Gobbled up my dinner to be ready —went to the coach-office at four—told London coach was not come in, and the other could not start till half an hour after its arrival; went at five—not arrived; fidgets increased; promised to arrive at nine next morning. Did not believe that; saw two hours fast adding to that—anticipated alarm of Liverpool managers—rehearsal dismissed; at last coach arrived, and at half-past six I was turned off.

I was told the coach was later by two hours than ever known—found it was licensed to carry six inside, and travelled all night. Saw "two women with a child a-piece"—took outside place—began to rain in ten miles—forced to get in—I made the eighth! One of the ladies was told, "*not on no account* to expose the child to night air,"—five months old—sour milk in a bottle! "One man did howl in his sleep," an eccentricity allied, I suspect, to madness. I awoke once, and found the windows close up. Eight inside—horrible, most horrible! I was stewed; but it rained the whole night, and I was obliged to endure it. I was compelled to have recourse to violent rage and ridicule, whenever I could address the guard, to get any air at all.

So, after all the pains and trouble to myself, horses, Simpson, &c., to avoid travelling all night in the mail, I exchanged it for the heavy Liverpool (a term I shall never forget), to travel all night with eight people, and that the night before I perform; however, it is all over, thank Heaven! and I am well.

I arrived at one o'clock, rehearsal over, of course; but luckily, it is the Manchester company who played with me in the same pieces when I was last there.

A theatrical beggar waited on me before I had been here an hour; and my never-failing friend, Ryley, shortly afterwards, but in high spirits. He performed here in the Music Hall on Saturday night, and had a good receipt.

I begin to-night—*Goldfinch* and *Buskin*. God bless you and my dear boy. I can spy the house in which he was born from my sitting-room window. Write soon.

C. Mathews.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Manchester, July 27th, 1818.

I am very well in spite of my tongue, which is diseased to a frightful extent; and if it is not relieved shortly, I must lie by till something is discovered to relieve me. I here to-day submitted to a leech in my mouth, by advice of my beloved P——, who is in higher feather than ever. It was a most unpleasant operation; but probably may be efficacious. My complaint "reminded" P—— of a "whimsical circumstance. Henderson—er er um—sore mouth—nekym ur—leeches—glyd um—three instead of one—sy nyt num—according to Cocker—if one does good—um er—how much will three do—er um er—put in ersycern or vwog—bled for three days"—ha, ha, ha! I am delighted my explanation has opened your eyes.

You may rely upon it, the interest of yourself and dear Charles is nearest to my heart; and that the object of my life will be to make him independent, and if I am blessed with health, it can and shall be done.

I had a great house last night at Liverpool, though the heat was near spoiling all. I have not time for particulars. To-night I wrote to Simpson, to ask him to meet me at Oxford, that we may arrange matters there. I hope to be at home on Friday night.

C. Mathews.

In the course of the autumn of this year (1818) Mr. Mathews visited his Welsh friends, and performed at Swansea for the first time since his early glories there. He was received in public with almost tumultuous plaudits, and in private with the glow of kindly hearts, whose recollection of him, after twenty years' absence, was as fresh as if he had been the favourite of yesterday with them. He was lucky enough to find among this single-minded warm-hearted race several of his first friends alive; and the meeting was mutually gratifying. He remembered how glad his youth had been made by the firesides of the respectable people who had courted him then, a friendless stranger; and they were gratified that in his raised condition he had retained a recollection so pleasing to them and honourable to himself.

We were at this time staying with our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Rolls, at Briton Ferry—a spacious and beautiful mansion, the scene of unbounded pleasure, and which better deserved to be called happiness than any mode of living, on so large a scale, in which I ever took a part. Mr. Mathews contrived to go over to chat with his old friends at Swansea very often, and on one occasion assembled them round a large table at the Mackworth Arms, where he gave them a dinner, and rehearsed old scenes

again and again, till the eyes of his guests overflowed with tears of delight. Even little Saddington, the prompter of Masterman's company, the only theatrical remains of olden times upon the spot, was not forgotten by "the great London actor," and on his return to us at night the good-hearted entertainer was as elated with the satisfaction he had given to the worthy people as if he had been receiving honours instead of conferring kindness.

In October, Mr. Mathews quitted Briton Ferry, leaving me with our friends till his return from his engagements in Ireland, his men of business, viz., Mr. Simpson his treasurer, and Mr. Edward Knight his musician, having joined him at Swansea, where the carriage and servants, &c., remained, for the purpose of accompanying him on his voyage.

CHAPTER XXII.

Mr. Mathews's second "At Home:" Trip to Paris—Description of that Entertainment—His farewell address—Literary pirates—Ivy Cottage and the picture gallery—Mr. Mathews in Scotland—Letters to Mrs. Mathews—The methodist and the actor—Letters to Mrs. Mathews.

THE period destined for a second attempt (no less hazardous than the first) to keep an audience in attentive good humour for nearly four hours by his single exertions,—if single that can be appropriately called which is made up of so multifarious a whole,—had now arrived. Accordingly on the 8th of March Mr. Mathews was again "At Home," and related his "Trip to Paris,"* with increased reputation, and performed a dramatic act, called "La Diligence,"† with equal success.

The following was the announcement :—

The Public are respectfully informed, that having been abroad, they will again find Mr. Mathews "At Home," in his old quarters, at the Theatre Royal English Opera House, Strand, on Monday next, March 8th, 1819, when he will have the honour to perform his

TRIP TO PARIS in their company.

PART FIRST.—Introduction.—Poetical Proem.—Recitation.—Tours; why generally undertaken.—Piccadilly.—Lady Dory the Fishmonger.—Sir Dogberry Dory gone to Paris.—Mr. Gossamer, junior, the Juvenile Glover.—Mr. Gossamer, senior, gone to Paris.—Everybody gone to Paris.

Song—*Do as other folks do.*

Recitation.—Leaders and Followers of Fashion.—Low Life or Vulgarity: what is it? and where does it exist?

Song—*Paris is the only place.*

Recitation.—Why Mr. Mathews determined to go.—Dover Mail.—Digression on Sleep (not long enough to provoke it).—Pleasant Travelling Companions.—A voyage to Calais.

* By Mr. Poole. † By Mr. James Smith.

Song—*Delights of the Packet.*

PART SECOND.—*Recitation.*—Safe Landed.—Jabber.—Surprise.—A French Commissionaire.—Wonder.—Extraordinary Talent of French Children.—Astonishment! a French Diligence.—Bathos: French Posting.—Orthoepical Perseeution; or poor Mr. Rogers and Monsieur Denise.—French Capital.—Meurice's Hotel.—Hiring a Valet-de-Place.—Anglo-Gallo-Hibernian.—Tuileries Gardens.—English Visitors.—Crowds of Cockneys.—Characters.—Craniology.—Mnemonics.—Physiognomy.—Mnemonics unexplained by Mr. Minikin.—Physiognomy ill explained by the Widow Loquax.—Craniology fully explained by

Song—*Lumps and Bumps.*

Recitation.—The Catacombs.—Lecture on Craniology, by the renowned Doctor Von Dunderdronk Von Hoaxburg Von Puzzledorff Von Chousehem.—Return to the Hotel.

Song—*A Day at Meurice's.*

PART THIRD.—*Recitation.*—Visit to the Théâtre Français.—Hamlet in Paris.—The Boulevards.—A Character.—Mundungus Trist.—Miseries.—More Miseries.

Song—*Heads for a Quarto; or, the Pains of Pleasuring.*

Recitation.—The Scotch Lady.—An Old Acquaintance.—Short Story about Something.—French Handbill in French English.—Lecture on England and the English Language, by Mons. Charles Guillaume Denise.—De Charlatanville.

Song—*The Departure; or, Now Farewell to Paris Revels.*

PART FOURTH.—A Mono-poly-logue Descriptive of LA DILIGENCE. *Diligenciæ Personæ:*

Jemmy, an English Boots at the foreign office (a very old acquaintance)	Mr. Mathews!
Monsieur Peremptoire, a Travelling Tutor .	Mr. Mathews!!
Monsieur Tommy Tarragon, his Infant Pupil, a "*Vox et præterea nihil*" . . .	Mr. Mathews!!!
Samuel Starch, Esq., "a tailor made him" .	Mr. Mathews!!!!
Hezekiah Hulk, a *great* Attorney of *Size* Lane	Mr. Mathews!!!!!
Miss Evelina Evergreen, an old Maid . .	Mr. Mathews!!!!!!
And Monsieur Poudré Méneur, a French Postilion	Mr. Mathews!!!!!!!

The Songs will be accompanied on the Pianoforte by Mr. Knight.

Mr. Mathews closed his "At Home," on Saturday, the 5th of June, after a most splendid and successful season, on which occasion he spoke the following Farewell Address:—

Ladies and Gentlemen,—The longest journey must have an end, and the pleasanter our progress on the road, the more painful is the parting

with our fellow-travellers. Such is my feeling at this moment, when, after travelling forty nights to and from Paris in your company, the hour has at length arrived when I must reluctantly bid you farewell.

If I may be allowed to judge of the cordial smiles with which my labours have been cheered throughout, I may venture to hope that you participate in this feeling; and I shall therefore solace myself, during the interval of separation from my indulgent friends, with the pleasing task of preparing to receive them "At Home" again next season, with new matter for their entertainment.

To this end I shall study new characters, and aim at new personations; not with an unworthy view to outrage private feelings, by holding up personal defects to ridicule, but with the more useful, and at the same time less offensive object, of showing how easily peculiarities become disagreeable if suffered to grow into habits; and how frequently habits, if so indulged in, may become ridiculous.

Such, with all humility, I consider to be the fair game of what is attempted to be degraded by the name of mimicry. It is that in the physical world which satire is in the moral; and if the work of a satirist of manners be not degraded by the appellation of a lampoon, I know not why the exhibition of an imitator of manner should be classed with the mere grimaces of a buffoon.

I have thought it necessary to say thus much in defence of that which I consider as the very soul of the profession of an actor—imitation; for no one, I presume, will deny, that Shakspeare would have written in vain (so far as applies to stage representation) had actors attempted to play *Othello* with a fair face, or *Richard the Third* without a hump.

Thus it appears there are cases in which even personal deformities and defects may become proper subjects of satire. Such as the decrepitude of age affecting the follies and gay frivolities of youth; the rich and antiquated one-eyed lover ogling the young and beautiful victim of an odious passion; or a youthful coxcomb, with bandy legs, obtruding his pitiable deformity on your notice by exhibiting his otherwise pretty person in a quadrille. Such, in endless variety, are the fair and allowed objects of imitative satire. Still, I may perhaps be acquitted from any charge of vanity, when I assert, that even in such cases a more than ordinary accuracy of observation is necessary to hit off successfully those nice distinctions of character and manner which form the wide difference between a correct portrait and a vulgar caricature; and if I have succeeded, or can succeed (by holding the mirror up to Nature, and showing Folly her own image, and Vice its own deformity) in correcting any one of a foolish habit, or an offensive peculiarity; and, above all, in affording the public a few hours of harmless mirth, I think my labours amply rewarded, and that my life has not been altogether passed, or my humble talents exerted, without some degree of usefulness.

Ladies and Gentlemen,—It now only remains for me to offer my grateful acknowledgments for the liberal, indeed splendid patronage I have received. So greatly has that patronage exceeded my hopes, that

I have to boast this season of having been honoured by the presence of some thousands of visitors more than attended me last year; and it is this unlooked-for increase of public favour that not only encourages a hope for the future, but stimulates every exertion of which I am capable, to merit, if possible, a continuance of your valuable, and, believe me, ever and highly valued kindness.

From the first year's "At Home" it was discovered that spurious editions of the performances were sold at the doors of the theatre; and Mr. Mathews was annoyed by seeing them in various parts of the theatre occasionally referred to by the persons thus imposed upon. As the whole of the pretended Entertainment was made up of the most contemptible trash that could be conceived, he had the mortification of hearing of it where the real performance was never heard; and frequently when on the stage he would find himself interrupted in a song by persons turning over the leaves of these books in order to trace in the words before them something resembling what they listened to. It was in vain that a notice appeared nightly in the bills, warning the visitors of the theatre that no printed edition of the entertainments was genuine; people did not read this warning and the nuisance continued. At last, grown bold by impunity, on the occasion of the "Trip to Paris," these pirates ventured to take down in short-hand some of the real matter. This afforded a tangible opportunity for stopping their proceedings; and Mr. Mathews, in order to give publicity to the fact he had so often wished to impress, namely, that he never had, nor ever would, print his "At Homes," applied for an injunction to stop the sale of the pirated edition, which he obtained, and which was thus announced in the newspapers.

On Saturday an injunction was obtained by Mr. Mathews in the Vice-Chancellor's Court, to restrain John Duncombe, and Dean and Munday, from selling any more copies of two works, purporting to be parts of "The Trip to Paris" (written expressly for him by Mr. James Smith and Mr. John Poole), as delivered by him at the English Opera House.

In May we took possession of Ivy Cottage, which Mr. Mathews had purchased on a lease of ninety-nine years; a term which gave him time to look forward to much enjoyment of it. We found it scarcely finished, and the grounds unformed. A space near it was found for the addition of the Picture Gallery, which was immediately planned and begun, and the shrubberies, lawn, and flower-garden laid out.

About this time Charles declared his predilection for architec-

ture. So earnest was he in his desire to make it his profession, that, after a great struggle, his father gave up his favourite wish of placing him in the church; and as it was necessary, under this change of plan, that the boy should immediately begin his preparatory studies, the idea of college, where Mr. Richardson had declared that he would acquire distinction, was relinquished, and an agreement entered into with Mr. Pugin, the architectural draughtsman (and the once scene painter in Wales, when Mr. Nash and Mr. Mathews acted together), to take the young artist for four years.

From this gentleman's design the Theatrical Picture Gallery was now completed; and no sooner had its owner formed this new tie to the spot, where to him happiness alone existed, than the very expense of maintaining it required his resignation of its pleasures, and his duty compelled his absence from it. Therefore, after he had satisfactorily placed his son in the only profession for which he had ever manifested an inclination, Mr. Mathews once more left home in pursuit of that bane of human life, and antidote to some of its cares—money. The large sums recently expended in raising the building I have mentioned, and in a premium to Mr. Pugin on Charles's account, rendered present exertions imperiously necessary to make up in some measure so considerable an outlay, in addition to the original purchase and furniture of the cottage, no mean amount in itself. Charles now began his architectural studies, in furtherance of which he accompanied Mr Pugin to Paris.

In the autumn of this year, Mr. Mathews projected a professional visit to Scotland, and broke ground at Edinburgh, where he was received with acclamation.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Edinburgh, Oct. 20th, 1819.

I am going on famously here. I gave my Trip on Wednesday. It would have done your heart good to hear the roars at the "Scotch-woman," the success of which I rather doubted here. It is the greatest hit I ever made anywhere in that part. Bless their goodnatured hearts! It was repeated on Thursday and last night (Friday). I netted the last night about 180*l.* At the words "he was a vary goodnatured body," which I hit happily, they gave me a thundering round of applause, which swelled into a hurrah, and the cheering at the close was delicious. To-morrow my benefit: *all* the boxes taken—the Trip again. My week will give me 300*l.*

All the world are here. 'Tis the Musical Festival. I heard a very charming concert last night in the theatre. Braham, Miss Stephens, Ambrogetti, Begrez, &c., and the instrumental part very perfect indeed.

A curious circumstance:—I received a letter (which I will preserve) from a Methodist preacher here, last week, to say he was a pastor of a congregation who could not afford to purchase a Bible, and requesting me to make a present of one; and I have done so! I made a condition that the following inscription should be upon it: "The Gift of Charles Mathews, *Comedian*." It is finished, and will be announced to the elect next Sunday!

CHARLES MATHEWS.

In a subsequent letter he says:

I enclose you the letter of my Methodist correspondent. To-morrow my Bible is to be sported in the pulpit, and the congregation informed who gave it.

To C. Mathews, Esq.

Oct. 12th, 1819.

DEAR SIR,—I hope you will pardon the liberty which I take in writing to you. But the fact is this, I knew your father well, and yourself some years ago heard me preach at the Adelphi Chapel, London. I am an Englishman, and at present supplying a congregation at Leith, most of them very poor people. We are in want of a Bible for our pulpit; and if you will have the goodness to present us with one, I should esteem it a singular favour, and as long as I live will bear you in my remembrance as a gentleman and a humane character; and I am sure my poor friends would esteem it a mark of the greatest kindness.

I remain, dear Sir, your very humble and obedient servant,

THOMAS WESTON.

At Mr. Rose's, Syms' Dry Dock, Leith.

The following description of a distressing dilemma, which occurred to him on the road to Dumfries, is at once a specimen of the great inconvenience Mr. Mathews sometimes encountered, and of the fortitude which on every important occasion he exhibited. The fretfulness which, as he observes, "the loss of an old slipper" would produce, never appeared under misfortunes of a graver cast,—there he was really a philosopher. The only occasion that I can remember under which his mental and physical faculties forsook him was in the overwhelming remorse he felt at having so rashly destroyed, by his obligation to Mr. Arnold, all future power to render those he loved independent of the world, in the event of his quitting it before them; an event which, in the course of nature, might be supposed certain—alas! too certain. Let the painful drawback to personal exertion by his lameness be remembered, and his determined activity will add grace to his behaviour under such circumstances as the following:—

To Mrs. Mathews.

Dumfries, Nov. 19th, 1819.

Did you happen to think of me on Tuesday night, about seven o'clock! And did it happen to blow a hurricane at Highgate, as it did in Dumfries-shire? If you could by possibility have taken a peep at me about that moment, or any one similarly situated who was even indifferent to you, you must have screamed at the sight. We had proceeded from Glasgow to within seven miles of Moffat, where we proposed to stay for the night, on our way to this town. There had been a deep snow of three hours' continuance, which was succeeded by a most tremendous storm of wind and rain. Daw was lulled to sleep, and I was thinking of you know who, and enjoying my home in perspective, when I was roused from my reverie by frequent warnings from our postilion, as I imagined, to some drivers of carts to keep on their own side. Suddenly a tremendous concussion shook me directly off my seat, and threw me upon Daw, and in an instant the carriage broke down. George literally shrieked; and, on lifting his head from under an umbrella, where he had crouched to protect himself from the storm, felt it instantly ascend (not his head!—the umbrella) with the force of the wind, and found himself lying in the road before he could account for the cause of his sudden removal. As the body of the carriage lay upon the axletree, and the head was up, it was some time before we could scramble out. My first thought was to discover the cause of our misery; and I sent George after the carts—there were about seven or eight without drivers! You may imagine our horrors. The concussion was so forcible that the front spring was forced quite out of its situation, two yards from the carriage, without being broken. Every bolt that attached it to the axletree was completely broken off, and there was apparently no possibility of its being moved from the spot. We were holding a council, when two men came up to inquire the nature of the damage. Luckily for myself, perhaps, I was not aware that they were two of the scoundrels belonging to the carts, who had been drinking whisky at a toll-bar about three hundred yards further on. They pronounced that the carriage could not be moved till repaired. Seven miles from any house but the toll-bar!—pouring, blowing—standing up to our ankles in wet—a frightfully bleak and mountainous country! Imagine our despair. We were for a few minutes unmanned and deprived of energy, and totally at a loss what course to pursue. It was too dark to ascertain the extent of our damage; and, for the first time since we had been out, George had forgot the candles for our lamps. I proposed (poor limp!) to run to the toll-bar. The driver, finding his horses very fidgetty, proposed taking them off, to prevent further mischief. In two minutes after, off they set, full gallop, towards Moffat, he of course after them. Here we were, deprived of his assistance. I reached the toll-bar, a mud hovel; inquired for ropes—not one, not even a bit of string. I gave a strong hint to Toll-trap to afford some assistance to drag the carriage to the gate. He had a friend with him, but neither offered to move. I

borrowed a lantern—three times, in my way to the carriage, the wind blew out the light, and almost my breath too. Since our Irish voyage, I have seen no such night. At last I reached the carriage; and found, with four of us, all that could be hoped would be to get it to the toll-bar. Daw propped up the body with his shoulder, I trundled the wheel that had been deprived of its proper action by the removal of the axletree, and George and the two rascals dragged the pole; for, as the horses were having a bit of fun by themselves, we had not their assistance. After a good deal of labour we got it to the toll-house: by this time we were soaked. The horses were at length caught and brought back, looking very foolish. At last it was settled that I was to ride one of the post-horses into Moffat, send a chaise with a smith, and ropes and bolts, and bring back Daw, who was left in the wretched hovel to wait its return, and guard the property. You may fancy my ride: up mountains and down again—alternate sleet, snow, and pouring rain—a stumbling old cart-horse, for he was no better. Oh, that I could bear the removal or loss of an old slipper with the temper I bore this misfortune! Here I rose superior to Daw, who is one of the cool tribe, and to George, one of the indifferent. At the top of a hill one mile long, and equal to the steepest part of Highgate, a sudden gust blew my horse out of his course. I was in spirits at having escaped so well, and caught myself at my old resource—a child—and cried, "Oh cry! what fun!" and immediately burst out laughing at the absurdity of my own ridiculous behaviour. I reached Moffat in safety, drenched to the skin, and did not discover till I had arrived that I had forgotten my hat, and had rode all the way in my cap which I put on when the head of the carriage is up. I put on some clothes of the landlord's (who is nearly the size of Wiggins), and, in an hour after my arrival, was seated by a large fire, with a good beef-steak and some whisky punch. Daw arrived at twelve, and the carriage, with George, the smith, &c. at one o'clock. The coughs of the two poor victims with me make me most thankful for my extraordinary constitution. Not the slightest inconvenience have I suffered. I am perfectly well, the carriage is repaired, and all right but a pair of old boots that were obliged to be cut off my legs with a knife—and Daw's umbrella, which we suspect to be the one seen on the coast of Aberdeen, going towards the coast of Holland.

CHARLES MATHEWS.

Burns died here. A very handsome mausoleum has been erected over his remains, and a statue by Turnerelli. I called on his widow to-day, and introduced myself to her. She received me with very good manners. She is a comfortable body, in a very neat little house. All the family are provided for. I saw the only portrait of him.

The following letter contains an account of another escape which Mr. Mathews was destined to experience "by flood and field."

To Mrs. Mathews.

Liverpool, Nov. 29th, 1819.

I wish Daw and George may live out the journey. I am fated to live with coughing subjects—two such victims! What a fortunate fellow I am! another escape! two indeed!

There were great advantages held out to me in coming from Whitehaven by water:—140 miles by land—mountains of Cumberland almost impassable in frosty weather—bad road—post horses scarce—only eight hours' daylight—two long days on the road. By sea:—about half-way—safe passage—constant traders—do it in twelve hours—save ten pounds. It was agreed! Daw always looking blank—Saturday morning, fair wind—Fishing smack hired on purpose—carriage "pood aw to bits"—put on board—wretched-looking vessel—no cabin or beds—deep fog came on—felt a horror—longed to say I won't go—recollected Captain Skinner saying, "Never afraid of anything at sea but a fog. However, desperate courage—made up my mind. Daw was already seated, wrapped up, looking like a melancholy watchman; I had just got the hand of a friend in mine, saying, "farewell!" and was descending nineteen stone steps, from the pier into the vessel, with a heavy heart, when crack went the foremast, and she broke off close to the deck. The act of hawling up the foresail had finished this ricketty mast. But for this providentially happening in the harbour, the vessel must have gone at sea, and the consequence, if not fatal, would at all events have been misery.

The carriage was unshipped. Started at twelve o'clock instead of seven: we commenced our land journey, which, but for the escape, would indeed have been miserable. Deep fog—roads like glass—horses slipping, one foot forward, the other back—and a hundred and forty miles before us. Still we were as merry as grigs: I did not know how to contain my joy. "Please to remember the boat," was our watchword when any little misery occurred. We made, spite of all impediments, fifty-six miles that night, but almost starved to death. Yesterday morning started at seven; and going out of Burton, about ten o'clock, down a hill, both horses fell, and the driver lay under them. The first effect was terrific. We were all unhurt—carriage and all. Other horses were procured, and another driver; and, after a long, cold, dreary journey, arrived here at ten last night, and were expected—good fires, good beds, my old lodgings. All troubles and miseries appear to be over.

Write in as good spirits as your last—it does me good.

C. Mathews.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Manchester, Dec. 7th, 1819.

I have just arrived here from Liverpool, where I stayed to do a good action last night, and avoided a "misery" which poor Daw had all to himself. I had sent him forward with the carriage; and, when within

a mile of Manchester, the tire of the hind wheel came off, and he was about an hour doing the mile—as usual, in the dark and raining.

Poor old Ryley, penniless and melancholy as usual, was ready for me on my arrival, and solicited me to do something for him after I had finished at the Theatre. Incledon also arrived, and sang three songs. So last night I did two acts of the "Mail Coach," and old "Trist"* and Charley both exhibited, to the tune of 100*l.* in the Music Hall; so "the Itinerant"† was in luck! "God bless the good people of Liverpool." I sent off 250*l.* to Stephenson, instead of the two hundred I promised to you.

And now, as I have got to dine and act to-night (for I could not afford to lose a night by my charity, therefore stole it out of my lungs), you must excuse my brevity.

C. Mathews.

* One of the names he gave to Mr. Ryley; from whose peculiar temperament he took the character so called.

† The title of Mr. Ryley's autobiography.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Mr. Mathews again "At Home"—Country cousins—Address to the audience—Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd—Close of performance at English Opera House, and Mr. Mathews's address—Mr. Mathews's visit to the provinces—His letters to Mrs. Mathews—Lady Butler and Miss Ponsonby—Personification of the late J. P. Curran—Letters of Mr. Mathews to Mrs. Mathews—Sensitiveness of Mr. Mathews—Anecdote—Letters continued—Two impostors—Mr. Mathews's proposal to erect a monument to Shakspeare at Stratford; public meeting on the occasion—Intended ascent in a balloon.

THE time now approached for his reappearance in London; and on the 28th of February, 1820, Mr. Mathews was again "At Home," and again was equally successful. His "Country Cousins," whom he now introduced, were welcomed to town with a warmth which detained them there until the close of the season in unabated favour, when they retired with the rest of the London fashionables. The following was the announcement:—

The Public are respectfully informed that they will again find

MR. MATHEWS AT HOME

At the Theatre Royal English Opera House, Strand, on Monday next, February 28th, 1820; when he will have the honour to commence his Annual Course of Lectures on Character, Manners, and Peculiarities, by introducing his Friends to his

COUNTRY COUSINS*

AND THE SIGHTS OF LONDON.

PART FIRST.—London Cousins.—Country Cousins.—Yorkshire Cousins (Mr. Mathews's).—Their Names and Descriptions.—Aunt Agatha.—Her last Despatches from Whitby.

Song—*Country Commissions.*

Sudden Incursion of the Goths from the North, viz., Aunt Agatha, Cousin Dolly, Cousin Jerry, Uncle Baffin, with Zachary Flail their Appendix.—Characters introduced: Sir Hubble Bubble and Doctor Prolix.—Tale of a *Tail.*—Gas *versus* Oil.—St. Dunstan's Church.—A

* By James Smith, Esq.

Buck Attorney.—Wager of Battle.—Chapter Coffee-house.—Loquacious Waiter.

Song—*White Horse Cellar.*

Monsieur de Tourville.—Garrick and Wilkes.—Dr. Prolix's Tale of a Head.—St. Paul's.—Queen Anne.—Bird Statuary.—Wren Architect.—Verger and Reverberation.—Tremendous Notice from the Whispering Gallery.—Bird's-eye View of London.

Song—*O what a Town, what a wonderful Metropolis.*

Panoramic Prospect.—St. James's Park.—Chelsea.—Greenwich.—Palaces.—Hospitals.—Bow Church.—Newgate.—Fleet Prison.—Lincoln's Inn.—Alderman's Walk.—College of Physicians.—Bedlam.—Winter Theatres.—Jerry's Digression.

Song—*Epsom Races.*

Part Second.—Moulsey Hurst.—Pugilism.—Song: *The Mill* (*Anglicè, A Fight*).—Country Cousins.—Carried to the Monument.—Cast Iron Southwark Bridge.—Catastrophes of Velocipedes.—Dr. Rumfoozle and Mrs. Inicumpip.—Incipient Prosecutions.—Exhibition at Somerset House.—Sir Hubble Bubble and the Hanging Committee.—Zachary Flail's Disasters.—Mock Auctions.

Song—*Zachary Flail's Description of London.*

Panorama of the North Pole.—My Uncle's Bay, *id est* Baffin's Bay.—Dr. Prolix on Nose Pulling.—Westminster Abbey.—Indictment at . . . . Sessions: Rex *versus* Patrick O'Row.—Justice Metaphor.—Counsellors Prim and Moonshine.—A Countess's Letter to a Comedian, and his proposed Answer.—Invitation of the Country Cousins to a Fashionable Rout.

Song—*The Rout, or Lady Fidget at Home.*

Failure of Gossamer and Goosetrap, Country Bankers.—Northern Invasion subsides.—Goths driven back to Whitby.—Adieu to London.

Finale—*Now Farewell to Bagatelle.*

Part Third.—Exhibition of the Multiplication Table during a Christmas at Brighton.—Solution of the Mysteries of Four Times Five, by the juxtaposition of the following Figures, viz.

Alderman Huckaback, in the Chair (surfeited).
Tabitha, his Maiden Sister at the Table (studious).
Snap, one of the Livery.
Signor Canzonetti, Singing Master.
Miss Matilda Huckaback, his Pupil.
Molly Magog, a Patagonian Nurse.
Methusalem, a Youthful Watchman.
Dicky Gossip, a Posthumous Barber.

The whole being embodied and animated by Mr. Mathews.

The Pianoforte by Mr. E. Knight.

Mr. Mathews prefaced his new entertainment by the following address :—

"Ladies and Gentlemen,—This being the third Season in which I am gratified by appearing 'At Home' before you, I am naturally reminded of the renowned Whittington, who, as you all know, enjoyed the delight of being thrice Lord Mayor of London. His fame was founded on a lucky cat—mine on a lucky hit. It was his department to banish mice, 'tis mine to banish melancholy. Why he was satisfied with being merely thrice Lord Mayor of London we are not told; perhaps the accumulation of custard upon his stomach rendered him unfit for the further fatigues of office. That—*ecce signum!*—is not my case. Neither will this, my third Election, satisfy an ambition that pants for

'Thrice again, to make up nine.'

It is therefore my intention, should I by your suffrages be re-elected to this comic chair, so to conduct myself, as to drive all Blue Devils out of the Strand from eight till eleven o'clock—to bind *Heigh-ho* over to good behaviour—and to place Ha! Ha! Ha! those three graces of speech, on that proud and palmy pinnacle to which their virtues and talents authorize them to aspire. It is my intention during the present evening to communicate the adventures which befel me in exhibiting some of the Sights of London to my Country Cousins.

"Before I enter upon my task, permit me, however, to utter a few words in explanation of the epithet 'imitation,' or, as it is sometimes in carelessness, and sometimes in hostility, called 'mimicry.' I look upon this talent when applied to the body, to be what satire is when applied to the mind.

"If the satirist drags forth private and innocuous frailties to public view, he sinks into a lampooner. If the imitator outrages private feelings by holding up incurable and unpresuming personal defects to public ridicule, he degenerates into a buffoon. It is my purpose to evince, by general delineations, how easily peculiarities may be acquired by negligence, and how difficult they are to eradicate when strengthened by habit; to show how often vanity and affectation steal upon the deportment of youth, and how sure they are to make their possessor ridiculous in after life; in short, to exemplify the old adage, that 'No man is contemptible for being what he is, but for pretending to be what he is not.'

"Now, then, for my Cousins."

It will appear by the next letter that the Ettrick Shepherd* had at one time some idea of contributing to Mr. Mathews's "Entertainments."

* James Hogg, "the Ettrick Shepherd," writer and poet, born 1782. An uneducated shepherd, with a taste for verse-making, and great good-fortune in attracting the notice of Sir Walter Scott and many literary men of eminence. His chief poetic work is "The Queen's Wake;" but his merits will not be judged by posterity to be equal to the fame which he enjoyed in his lifetime. He died in 1835.

To Francis Anderson, Esq., Jun.

Altrive Lake, March 1st, 1820.

My dear Frank,—I have always looked upon Mrs. McKnight's Original Stories as truly inimitable;* and as soon as I got your letter, I gave up the idea of being able to comply with your request, and very stupidly forgot to answer you. You know how happy I am always to oblige you, and there is nothing I would not try for such an ingenious original as Mr. Mathews; but truly and honestly I have little chance of success. If I can produce aught that pleases me, I will send it; but do not harass me should it not arrive, for then be sure I have failed.

I am yours ever, most affectionately, James Hogg.

On the 27th of June the season at the English Opera closed, and Mr. Mathews made his farewell bow at the end of his third campaign. The house was extremely well filled, and he contrived to keep it in a roar of laughter, as hearty and unrestrained as on the first night of his attempt. At the close of his performance he came forward, and thus addressed the audience:—

"Ladies and Gentlemen,—Thus I conclude the third season of my entertainments, which, through your unexampled kindness and patronage, I may boast of as having been pre-eminently successful. To say that I am proud and grateful for the distinction you have conferred on me, would be but faintly to express the warmth of those feelings which animate me towards my benefactors. To have already drawn together one hundred and twenty audiences, crowded by rank and fashion, is no mean boast for an humble individual like myself; but when I reflect that I may exclaim with the Roman hero, 'Alone I did it,' I confess I feel a glow of self-gratulation that my good fortune prompted me to quit the long beaten path of the regular drama, to adventure on so novel and hazardous an undertaking.

"It now only remains for me to assure you, that no exertions of ingenuity, or labour of observation, shall be wanting to render my next year's entertainment still more deserving of your favour than those which have preceded it; and I do trust to be enabled so far to vary its nature as to present you with something new, not only in substance and character, but in method and arrangement also. At all events, I trust I shall not have exhausted in myself the happy faculty of exciting your mirth, aud I hope you will not have lost the inclination to come here and be merry.

"Ladies and gentlemen, with reiterated thanks, and the most cordial good wishes, I now respectfully bid you farewell."

As he retired, the pit rose and greeted him with the waving of hats, whilst loud cheers resounded from every part of the house.

* In allusion to the Scotch Lady.

The rigid determination of Mr. Mathews to lose no time in the prosecution of his plan of atoning for past mistakes by personal sacrifice and labour, induced him again to form provincial engagements, without allowing himself an interval of rest after his fatiguing season. In pursuance of this resolution, therefore, on the evening of his last night at the English Opera House, he took leave of home, sleeping in town in order to begin his journey thence the next morning at daybreak. His first letter, merely a few lines scribbled at his first halt on the road, gave me the following hurried notice of his concluding night's performance:—

To Mrs. Mathews.

Maidenhead, June 26th, 1820.

Arrived here not quite broiled. Just off again. Good house last night; everything went well. Quite smooth in my address. The Duke of Wellington was in a private box, and sent me a message at the end of the first part, begging that I would be quick between the acts, and that I would not mention his name.*

C. Mathews.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Ludlow, July 6th, 1820.

This is the most beautiful town, I think, in England, in the most luxuriant country. Here are two days' races. They have evening races; and the play does not begin till these are over. Last night I began my work at ten o'clock! At half-past nine not one person in the house; by ten it was full; ay, 40*l.*! and wonderful, too—such a barn! To-night I expect the same sort of thing.

I never heard of anything so hard or so unjust in my life as your suffering from that fiend, Mrs. ——; my blood boiled while I read your account. For once my discernment has been superior to yours; I never could endure that woman. Pray write often, if only four lines, for I have been long enough away to be very low, at times, and I have been fidgety and uncomfortable all this day in consequence of the non-arrival of the paper.

C. Mathews.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Evesham, July 20th, 1820.

I was travelling all day yesterday, and arrived here just as the mail made its appearance for London.

I did wonders at Birmingham. What think you of 90*l.* in a room?

* Not wishing a pointed recognition from the audience.

This was Thursday. The common outcry was against Saturday for a second performance, as it is pay-night, and the worst night in the week:—"What a pity you can't play to-morrow?"—"No; impossible!"—"Monday?"—"Advertised at Cheltenham!"—"Well, it's a pity, for I really would not advise you to play on Saturday: we are all in our counting-houses till eleven."—"Never mind," said I, "I will try." I did: 75*l.* Ha! I have no doubt, no hesitation in pronouncing that this was the greatest thing I ever accomplished, and shows that my new name is greater than my old one, for my attraction had evidently ceased when I was in Birmingham last. This completes my right reading, 400*l.* in the month; not clear, mind.

I have seen within these three or four days an extraordinary exhibition; four children all born in one day of one mother, all exactly alike; sixteen months old, and all hearty.

C. MATHEWS.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Oswestry, Sept. 4th, 1820.

The dear inseparable inimitables, Lady Butler and Miss Ponsonby, were in the boxes here on Friday. They came twelve miles from Llangollen, and returned, as they never sleep from home. Oh, such curiosities! I was nearly convulsed. I could scarcely get on for the first ten minutes after my eye caught them. Though I had never seen them, I instantaneously knew them. As they are seated, there is not one point to distinguish them from men: the dressing and powdering of the hair; their well-starched neckcloths; the upper part of their habits, which they always wear, even at a dinner-party, made precisely like men's coats; and regular black beaver men's hats. They looked exactly like two respectable superannuated old clergymen; one the picture of Borowlaski. I was highly flattered, as they never were in the theatre before.

The packets now sail at seven in the morning; all day-work instead of night, which is delightful; and the weather is heavenly. People here are extremely hospitable; but, of all days in the year, Mr. Ormsby Gore went to Carnarvon assizes (being high sheriff) the day before I arrived. He only returned yesterday; and almost forced me away from the inn. I, however, could not conveniently go there, but have been to call this morning. Such a place!

By the by, have you any magnolias in the grounds? if not, get me one or two. I saw a Portugal laurel, only four years old, full half the size of that great beauty at Lord Mansfield's; pray have one or two of them placed by themselves on our new lawn.

I have to-day received an invitation to call, if I have time as I pass, at Llangollen, to receive in due form, from the dear old gentlemen called Lady Butler and Miss Ponsonby, their thanks for the entertainment I afforded them at the theatre.

C. MATHEWS.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Porkington, Oct. 24th.

Well, I have seen them, heard them, touched them. The pets, "the ladies," as they are called, dined here yesterday—Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby, the curiosities of Llangollen mentioned by Miss Seward in her letters, about the year 1760. I mentioned to you in a former letter the effect they produced upon me in public, but never shall I forget the first burst yesterday upon entering the drawing-room, to find the dear antediluvian darlings attired for dinner in the same manified dress, with the Croix de St. Louis, and other orders, and myriads of large brooches, with stones large enough for snuff-boxes, stuck into their starched neckcloths! I have not room to describe their most fascinating persons. I have an invitation from them, which I much fear I cannot accept. They returned home last night, fourteen miles, after twelve o'clock. They have not slept one night from home for above forty years. I longed to put Lady Eleanor under a bell-glass, and bring her to Highgate for you to look at. To-morrow night I *give* a night here to Stanton, a poor manager. On Thursday, Litchfield; Saturday, Cheltenham; and then for home; dear home, dear Nancy and Charles!

I really would advise building the wall, if you are clear we have a right to build; but if you are in any doubt, I shall be home about Monday week; but, again I say, do what you like.

C. Mathews.

Mr. Mathews excessively disliked to be looked at. He would make a circuit, lame as he was, through all the dirty windings of London, or elsewhere, to escape the recognition of the better-bred part of the population; and, like a shying horse, he was always on the look-out for objects of annoyance. In driving about town he would generally keep the blinds down on his side, and would push me forward in the carriage, as he said, "to take off the stare from him." On all public (non-professional) occasions he liked to have some noticeable person with him, to attract the looks of strangers from him. If he heard his name even whispered, his eyes would fall and his colour mount; yet, sometimes, if any person, in middle or low life, appeared to know him, and discovered their knowledge by any indications that seemed involuntary, a smile, or a leer, he would smile good-humouredly in return and not feel annoyed at such notice, though at the same time it made him look "sheepishly." Not only did he object to the gaze of strangers, but any other person looking fixedly at him, or any part of his dress, was equally disagreeable to his feelings; yet often, as if by a fatality, he had

something about him that seemed to invite the notice he disliked. He constantly wore a miniature eye as a shirt-pin, which naturally attracted the observation of people while they listened to him. From the weight of its setting, it always appeared as if it was in danger of falling out; and when warned of the probability of this happening, he would hastily (and, as I knew, impetuously) button up his waistcoat to hide it from further remark.

A droll incident occurred to him after his visit to Sir Roger Gresley. On the following day, having returned to his inn at Litchfield, he was visited by one of the gentlemen whom he had met the evening before. Mr. Mathews was always restless and depressed on his days of performance. This was one of them; and he willingly would have dispensed with the company of his new acquaintance. As the visit lengthened, he paced up and down the room, from time to time, with some impatience. The visitor, however, was immovable. At length conversation began to flag. The restlessness of my husband increased, but the gentleman seemed rooted to his chair. It was evident, too, that while Mr. Mathews walked about, the eyes of the visitor were directed to his feet. He thought that his lameness caused this pointed notice, and sat down abruptly. Still the eyes gazed with undiminished interest; and no admirer of a Cinderella foot ever appeared more fascinated than did this gentleman with those of my poor husband. Again he started up; again he walked and talked. The gentleman answered, but seemed to grow absent. Still, however, his eyes "glared," as my husband angrily termed it, at his feet. At last, quite unable any longer to endure this persevering investigation of his pedal peculiarities, he suddenly informed his visitor that he must excuse him, as he had the business of the night to arrange. The gentleman again looked anxiously at the feet of the now really enraged owner of them (who showed by his manner how much he was annoyed), hesitated, and blushed; but at last timidly observed, "Those shoes of yours are very peculiar, Mr. Mathews?" A snappish "Yes, sir," was all the reply of the wearer, whose anger was increasing every instant. "I had, I think, a pair like them."—"Probably," was the only word jerked out in answer. "Indeed I did not think a second pair was to be found of the same make." My husband looked daggers as he observed his visitor's eyes still riveted upon his feet. "You, perhaps, remember," he continued, "where you bought them, Mr. Mathews; for I really

shall be glad to get a pair readily?" No reply was given to this, but an impatient movement of said feet into another position. At last, pressed to account for the manner in which he procured these "admirable shoes," he cast his own eyes upon them, and, to his surprise, perceived that they were not his own, but, as the gentleman said, a "very peculiar pair," and much too large for his very small feet.

The truth at once flashed across his mind:—"These shoes, sir, perhaps, are yours?" The owner of them, for such he was, bowed, coloured, and said: "Why, Mr. Mathews, if you'll pardon my thinking so, I must confess I believe them to be mine. I had them made after a plan of my own, for shooting-shoes, and missed them this morning with great regret, my servant bringing me a pair much too small for me; and I suspect they would better fit your feet than mine." The matter was clear; and they both laughed heartily. The most extraordinary part of this unconscious felony was, that the person wearing them did not perceive the bad fit of the shoes, or find himself inconvenienced with their weight, for the soles were embossed with nails!

This incident amused him at the time; and afterwards, whenever a "good starer" came in his way, the recollection of it had the wholesome effect of making the stared at think of the stolen shoes, and sometimes (if not on a performance day) smile, instead of expressing annoyance, at any partial notice.

Sanguine as he was with regard to the continuance of his popularity in his Entertainments at this early period, he would have proved an absolute sceptic had any one assured him that his reputation and success would proceed increasingly for fourteen years after, and then only cease—with his life!

Mr. Mathews had for some time past set his heart upon promoting, by a public subscription, the erection of a monument to Shakspeare in his native place; and his present visit there was chiefly on this account.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Stratford, Dec. 19th, 1820.

I have just returned from the Town Hall. Would that thou couldst have seen me! Unprepared, unarranged, I rushed before them: I opened my plans, my proposals; and, in an extempore speech, gained the applauses of "Ladies and Gentlemen." *L'affaire est fini.* Two clergymen (one of them Dr. Davenport, the vicar) joined their names to mine as parties concerned. Subscriptions were immediately offered, a committee formed, and the town half on fire already. Would you be-

lieve it, the first propitious circumstance on our arrival, the first thing we heard, was, that the site of Shakspeare's house, New-place, where he died, and where the mulberry-tree grew, is to be disposed of? I have got myself into a notoriety that I did not seek or expect. I was voted treasurer by acclamation; and, when the meeting was over, a private communication was made to me that the corporation wished to bestow some mark of their favour upon me—would I like the freedom?—in short, "what was done for Garrick ought to be done for me." I declined all notice till the affair, at all events, was completed.

C. MATHEWS.

The following account of this meeting appeared at the time:—

Agreeably to the suggestion of Mr. Mathews, a meeting of the inhabitants of Stratford-upon-Avon was held at the Town Hall, on the 19th of December, 1820, to consider of the best mode of erecting, in the form of a theatre, a national monument to the immortal memory of Shakspeare.

Upon this occasion Captain Saunders took the chair.

Mr. Mathews stated, at considerable length, the object of calling the meeting. It had long been a subject of regret to the literary and dramatic world, he observed, that a town so distinguished as the birthplace of Shakspeare should not possess some token of national respect and gratitude to such an immortal genius. In other towns similar instances had occurred under far less imperative reasons. On the Calton-hill, near Edinburgh, a monument had been erected to the memory of Hume the historian; at Dumfries a mausoleum had been raised by the inhabitants to commemorate their poet Burns. But the only tribute worthy of notice to the memory of Shakspeare, was privately erected by Garrick, in his own garden at Hampton. He was desirous of stating that, in coming forward on the present occasion, he had anything but interested views. He was ready to go hand and heart into the business: he would apply personally to all he knew; he would even endeavour, through the medium of those most distinguished members of the Royal Family, who had ever patronized the arts in general, and, above all, the drama, to lay this proposition at the foot of the throne; and he felt the fullest confidence that our gracious monarch would give his patronage and purse to the completion of this object. He would, moreover, exert what influence he possessed with every man of rank and talent, every poet, artist, and sculptor, whom he was fortunate enough to know, to aid this important undertaking. He particularly impressed on their minds that he did not wish at all to tax any person against his inclination or means. It would be the proudest boast of any person's life to say, in after times, when passing by this building, "Ay, I had a hand in that." All this he left entirely to their own ideas. But, above all, he begged their strenuous and united exertions in a cause so important to the literary and dramatic character of the whole country.

It was resolved unanimously—

That Charles Mathews, Esq., be hereby appointed president and treasurer of the committees.

It was further resolved unanimously—

That a committee of management in London be formed under the direction of Mr. Mathews, who shall have power to embody the same and enlarge it *ad libitum*.

It is a very melancholy fact that Mr. Mathews was not originally altogether lame from his accident, as is evident from the circumstance of his notice in the foregoing letter of his seven miles' walk. Had he been satisfied with the partial cure which had been effected, it would have been a great blessing to him and to those who loved him; but not finding his natural activity entirely restored, he was restless and anxious about it, always believing himself so nearly well as to feel he could not be far removed from entire recovery. This feeling operated so constantly that it induced many experiments, which ultimately rendered it a painful effort to him to walk only a few yards.

In March of this year the following paragraph appeared in the papers, the forerunner of many of a similar kind:—

It is reported that a gentleman of great comic celebrity in the theatrical world is shortly to ascend in a balloon. Whether the object be to satisfy a curious and inquiring mind—

To catch the manners living as they rise,

we know not; but must express our decided disapprobation of such a hazardous undertaking; which might be the means of depriving the public of the gratification always received from his unrivalled talents. Should this meet his eye, he will not think the worse of us for the suggestion.

In explanation of this report, it is necessary to relate that Mr. Mathews had long entertained a desire to ascend in a balloon, and falling in with a person of the name of Livingstone, who was speculating upon sending one up from London, Mr. Mathews actually promised, under pain of a heavy penalty in case of failure, to go up with him in the spring of this year. Upon learning this, the idea immediately occurred to the manager, Mr. Arnold, that such an event would give a pleasant and popular subject and title to the next entertainment; and consequently every preparation was made in reference to the expected adventure; but my consent was wanting. At first I

had only faintly opposed what I really conceived to be an intimation made jestingly; but, unluckily, this apparent indifference about the undertaking induced my husband thus fearlessly to bind himself. When, however, he came to town, and declared his serious intention, and his positive agreement with Mr. Livingstone, I urged him to give up the project at any loss, for that I never could consent to what seemed to me so hazardous an experiment. The consequence was that the design, after a fruitless struggle to conquer my objections, was reluctantly given up, and the fine paid (a considerable one), for the owner of the balloon had great expectations of profit from so remarkable an aeronaut.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Annonncement of Mr. Mathews's Adventures in Air, Earth, and Water—Account of these Adventures—Address on the close of the fourth season of Mr. Mathews's entertainments—Anecdotes of Mr. Coleridge and Mr. Charles Lamb—Letter of Mr. Coleridge to Mr. Mathews.

The relinquishment by Mr. Mathews of his design of ascending in a balloon greatly disappointed public expectation, and frustrated in some measure the arrangements for the next "At Home." The proprietor of the theatre, therefore, found it expedient, in the form of advertisements, to follow up the reports of Mr. Mathews's intention by an affected and playful belief of his ascent. Many ingenious intimations were to be seen, in the papers and elsewhere, for a week or two previously to the reopening of the English Opera House, which served as announcements of his

ADVENTURES IN AIR, EARTH, AND WATER.

Found.—Mr. Mathews.

Who (having been out of his element) will be *found* again at home (for the 125th time), at the Theatre Royal, English Opera House, Strand, this present Thursday, March 15th, 1821, when it is respectfully announced that he will have the honour to attempt a description of his Travels in

AIR, EARTH, AND WATER!

Part I.—AIR.—Ballooning.—Reasons for rising.—Professional Opinions.—Friends in a Fever.—Mark Mirabel, the Wonderer.—Sentimental Reflections on Sailing.—Major Longbow, the modern Munchausen.—White Lies.—Mr. and Mrs. Guffin.—Mrs. Damper, a Job's Comforter.—Inquisitive Ladies.

Song—*Air Ballooning.*

Lady's Album.—Little Extracts from great Poets.—Autographs.—Monsieur *Arc en Ciel's* Essay on Ballooning!—Odd Sensations on quitting *Terra Firma.*—Putney Bridge and Wandsworth Common.—Patience in a Punt.—Frightening Fish.—Cockney Sportsmen.

Song—*The First of September.*

Re-ascent.—Munchausen *in Nubibus*.—Telescopic Observations.—Chinese Juggler.—Skein of Cotton Thread.—View of Margate.—Speculations on Smoke.

Song—*Steam-Boat.*

Part II.—EARTH.—Margate Pier.—Passengers per Steamer.

Song—*Déjeûné at St. Peter's.*

Paul Pinnacle, the Quality Tag, and Cutter of Commons—his System shown up.

Song—*High and Humble, What a Jumble!*

Mr. Mathews's Code of Cuts.—Cut Celestial, Cut Infernal, Cut Collateral, Cut Retrospective, and Cut Direct!—Mr. and Mrs. Capsicum.—Barnaby Thwack, the Donkey-Driver.—Danger of Non-aspiration of an H.—Epitaphs in a Churchyard transplanted to an Album.—Dissertation on Dress.—Lodgings to let.—Warm Reception in Close Quarters.—An Attorney's Bill.—Catching a Native.—Tossing in a Carpet.—Daniel O'Rourke—his Dream—his Visit to the Man in the Moon.—Mr. Chick-cherry-clap, the Margate Librarian.

Song—*The Margate Library.*

Return Home.—Finale.

Part III.—WATER.—Mr. Mathews will represent the *Pleasures* of a Sea-voyage in

THE POLLY PACKET.*

Passengers per Polly :—

Mr. Theophilus Tulip, a novice on the ocean.
Mrs. Tulip, his maternal mamma.
Monsieur Jeu-Singe, French artist in dancing-dogs and monkeys.
Isaac Tabinet, a Jew merchant.
Major Longbow, } Aeronauts on their return.
Mr. Mathews, }
Daniel O'Rourke, Steward of the *Polly*.
Invisible Captain.
Poultry in the Hold.

N.B.—As *three* of the elements have already been intruded upon, in order that the *fourth* may not feel aggrieved, it is necessary to state that a good FIRE is constantly kept in the theatre.

The songs will be accompanied on the pianoforte by Mr. E. Knight (Pupil to Mr. T. Cooke), who will perform favourite rondos between the parts.

Of these Adventures, the following account is worth preservation :—

* Written by R. B. Peake, Esq.

About the middle of March the dead walls of the metropolis displayed to the wondering gaze of passengers the following placard, in letters of enormous size:—

"1000*l*. *Reward!—Charles Mathews, Esq.!*

"Whereas, it is said, that the above gentleman, actuated by a strange propensity for rising in the world, *left his home*, at Highgate, perpendicularly, on Saturday, in a balloon, and has not since been seen or heard of. If this be fact, there can be no doubt (from his known habits of punctuality) that he will be 'At Home' at the English Opera House on Thursday next, 15th March, when he will probably give the account of his adventures in the air, &c.

"N.B.—If he will return to his disconsolate friends (the public), no questions will be asked; and he will, doubtless, in the course of the season receive the above reward."

Much speculation was set on foot by the appearance of this advertisement, and many of those good, easy, well-meaning persons, who never look beyond the surface of anything, read the "quiz" in solemn sadness, commenting very profoundly upon the folly of the aeronaut in thus endangering his precious limbs. The theatre, however, was crowded upon the appointed evening, and Mr. Mathews delighted the audience with a novel entertainment. It opens with the descent of Mathews upon the stage in a balloon; when, taking out his watch, he remarks, "He has, luckily, *landed* at the English Opera House just at the hour appointed for commencing the performances." He then gives his reason for undertaking the aerial excursion. "All his friends had advised him to relinquish his 'At Home,' assuring him that it was utterly impossible to produce any novelty. He, however, was not to be persuaded; and having 'exhausted worlds,' determined to 'imagine new,' by the assistance of a balloon." Various personages endeavour to alter his resolution; and the arguments they make use of are detailed with exquisite humour. Among them is Mrs. Damper, a "Job's comforter," who, finding him resolved to persevere, details to him with great exactness, the names of all those who have perished by falls from balloons. He ascends; and, after meeting with sundry adventures, finds himself upon the banks of the Thames, at Wandsworth. He is here joined by a Major Longbow, a modern Munchausen, whose character is the tit-bit of the entertainment, and is certainly conceived and sustained in most admirable style. It surpasses all that we principally admired in the preceding entertainments; even the *Old Scotch Lady* is not more humorous. This *Major* is everlastingly boasting of his "muscle," and telling outrageous and unblushing falsehoods, clenching every one with the exclamation, "Upon my life, it's true! What'll you lay it's a lie?" There is also a *Monsieur Arc en Ciel*, who favours the company with a very learned dissertation on ballooning. At Wandsworth the party meet with *Patience* in a punt, in the shape of *Mr. Job Twaddle*, formerly an eminent hosier in Gutter-lane, who is a most persevering angler, and in the course of a fortnight had the good fortune to meet with one *nibble* and one *bite!* We never saw

anything more laughable and true to nature than the way in which Mathews imitates the old gentleman's manner of examining his various lines, and his desponding shake of the head when he finds he is not likely to meet with any sport. *Mr. Twaddle* is a decided enemy to steamboats, and upon being asked "Wherefore?" replies, "They frighten the fish!" He also dislikes bathing, because it "frightens the fish!" And balloons likewise, for the same reason. Upon this, *Longbow* says:—"I advise you, sir, never to show your face in the water." "Why, so sir?"—"'Twill frighten the fish. Upon my life it's true! What'll you lay it's a lie?" Certain cockney sportsmen now approach, and a long burlesque account of their adventures occurs. *Longbow* and *Mathews* now re-ascend, and the *Major* indulges in some of his usual hyperboles, when the travellers arrive in sight of Margate; and the sight of the steam-packet induces a very happy caricature of the humours of the vessel, in mingled recitation and singing. They then descend, and thus finishes the first part.

Part II. commences with a description of the gaieties of Margate, and a *dejeunêr* at St. Peter's. Several of the visitors pass in review; amongst whom is a notorious dinner-hunter, or feaster at other people's expense. "That man can drink a great deal; can't he?" says some one. "Oh! yes, any *given* quantity," is the reply. After him come *Mr.* and *Mrs. Capsicum*, vulgar citizens, and *Paul Pinnacle*, a would-be fashionable, who spends his life in courting the society of great people, and thinks more about the House of Lords than he does of the Lord's house. This character is very elaborately described, and is evidently drawn from life. His directions for "cutting," though the idea is not new, are highly diverting. In the next place, Mathews accompanies to the churchyard a young lady, who carries a magnificent album, in which she collects autographs and epitaphs. Of the former she has, among others, that of Sam Swob, the steersman of the steam-packet; and amongst the latter, the well-known lamentation, "Afflictions sore long time I bore," &c. She also has "An Original Poem, by Lord Byron," commencing, "My name, d'ye see, 's Tom Tough, and I've see a little sarvice;" and some verses by Rogers, the first couplet of which is—

> "I am a brisk and sprightly lad,
> And just come home from sea, sir!"

On his return from the churchyard, Mathews meets with an old acquaintance, in the form of *Daniel O'Rourke*, who was introduced in the "Trip to Paris." A whimsical detail of *Daniel's* adventures since that period follows; and the piece terminates with the picture of a Margate library, and the embarkation on board the packet to return to London.

Thus far all has been mere description; but, in the third part, Mathews again undertakes that rapid assumption of characters, in which he is so perfectly unrivalled. The stage represents the cabin of the packet, with the berths, holds, &c. In the first place he enters as *Daniel O'Rourke*, who has obtained the situation of steward to the

Polly Packet. After much laughable singing and soliloquizing, the performer's powers of ventriloquism are called into service, and the captain's voice is heard upon deck, calling for *Daniel* to come aloft. He ascends, and in a moment re-enters as *Mrs. Tulip*, a lusty sensitive dame, who expresses much disgust at the inconvenience of the packet, and alarm for the safety of her darling boy. After which she retires to the ladies' apartment. She is succeeded by *Major Longbow*, who, as usual, boasts of his "muscle!" tells the accustomed lies, and then descends into the hold. After him comes *Mons. Jeu-Singe*, a Frenchman, proprietor of an establishment for dancing dogs, who takes refuge in one of the berths, and is followed by *Isaac Tabinet*, a Jewish smuggler, by whom another of the berths is occupied. *Master Theophilus Tulip*, an overgrown spoiled urchin, now appears, crying loudly for his "mamma," and labouring under the horrors of sea-sickness. He also seeks a cot; and has scarcely laid himself down, when *Longbow* reascends from the hold. His "muscle," however, has failed him; his stomach, like *Stephano's*, is "not constant," and he is fain to have recourse to his nightcap and pillow. Lastly, Mathews enters in his own person, rallies the *Major* upon his fresh-water sickness, and terminates his entertainment with a brief address of thanks to the audience.

We will not pretend to say that the two first parts surpass those of former seasons, because we think the wit of those performances cannot well be exceeded; but we assert, without reserve, that the concluding part is much more admirable than that of the preceding year.

Mr. Mathews closed the fourth season of his entertainment on the 14th of June. It maintained its wonted attraction even to the close, the house not only being well but fashionably attended. At the termination of the night's performance Mr. Mathews delivered the following farewell address:—

"Ladies and Gentlemen,—It has been said, and I believe truly, that every man, however gifted with talents and enlightened by learning, has some point in his character open to the attacks of flattery, and accessible to the assaults of vanity. To partake of this weakness, therefore, in common with the clever and the wise, can scarcely reflect disgrace upon any one. Be this as it may, I freely acknowledge myself, albeit neither learned nor wise, to be in the highest degree vain, and to the greatest extent susceptible of flattery. The flattery of which I speak is your undiminished approbation and applause; and the vanity which I think so excusable as to make it my boast arises from the belief, that no man by his own single exertions ever was so fortunate as to excite the public notice and attention for so long a period as I have had the happiness of exciting yours. This evening will close the hundred and sixtieth performance! in which I have alone stood before you. I may therefore with truth assert, what few individuals can assert so truly, that I have passed a hundred and sixty evenings with unmixed pleasure; for I have seen nothing around me but cheerful

happy faces. If this world be indeed, as we are told it is, a world of trouble and care, how gratified should he feel, who (for a few hours at least) can banish those demons from the hearts of his friends! Believing, as my vanity (pardonable vanity, I trust,) induces me to believe, that I have been the happy means of accomplishing this desirable end, I confess, my gratification will be unbounded and complete, provided you allow me the pleasure of anticipating as cheerful a meeting next year; and, in the mean time accept, with gracious kindness, my heart-felt thanks and most respectful farewell!"

Our personal knowledge of Mr. Coleridge commenced in the autumn of the year 1819, after our arrival in Kentish Town (or, more properly, Highgate Hill), when he kindly claimed our acquaintance in the quality of neighbour.

Many, many delightful hours did Mr. Coleridge's splendid conversation give us and our friends. From his kind-heartedness, his beautiful simplicity of manner (for his familiar thoughts and expressions were as admirable as the higher attributes of his vast mind) we really loved, as much as we admired him. My flower-garden proved a very great attraction to him, and he visited it very often, being passionately fond of flowers. As he went he gathered them till his hands were full, repaying me for these floral treasures with the costly gems which fell from his mouth, as the pearls and diamonds were said to have poured from the lips of the good fairy, in the child's tale. He doted upon flowers, and discoursed so poetically upon them, that I frequently regretted my want of power to preserve the many-coloured beauties of his observations. He was so kind, too, whenever kindness was valuable. In illness his manner partook of the tender compassion of a woman; his pity was almost feminine. I remember on one occasion, after a long confinement, his coming down the hill, one stormy and severe winter's night, to cheer me with an entertaining book—some periodical just published—and sitting with me and a friend who resided with me, in my dressing-room, reading and commenting upon what he read, until I forgot my indisposition. Indeed, I do not know whether he was not a more charming companion when he stooped his magnificent mind to the understanding of the less informed and little gifted than when he conversed with higher intellects. It is perhaps too bold an assertion, yet I will venture to say that he was not less delightful by such condescensions of his genius, or less esteemed for them. He was accordingly attached to my husband, always writing and speaking of him as "dear Mathews," and he was equally partial to Charles.

The simplicity of Mr. Coleridge's character on familiar occasions gave us infinite amusement, which, on his perceiving it, he allowed, with a smile against himself, while some charming remark would increase our enjoyment, and he would leave us with his benevolent features beaming with good-humour and kindness. One invariable result of his earnestly engaging in a long subject of discourse was a total abstraction of mind succeeding to it. In our drawing-room we had placed a large mirror, which reached from the ceiling to the floor, so inserted (without any visible frame) as to seem a continuation of the apartment. On taking leave, morning or night, he generally made an effort to pass through this glass; and it was our custom always to watch his first movement of departure, in order to be ready to guard against the consequences of an attempt to make his way out through this palpable impediment, and guide him to the door. To all this he would submit, talking and laughing upon the point which prevented his knowledge of outward things, until the entrance-gate was closed upon him.

During the first part of our acquaintance with him, Mr. Coleridge talked much to us of his friend "Charles Lamb," and expressed a strong desire that we should know him. His affectionate manner, when speaking of Mr. Lamb, interested us as much for the man as for the writer, whose published works we had read; and it was at last arranged that we should dine on the 5th of May in this year, at Mr. and Mrs. Gilman's (the intellectual and excellent friends with whom Mr. Coleridge resided), in order to meet this charming person and his amiable sister.

On our reaching Mr. Gilman's house, we found Mr. Coleridge anxiously waiting for Lamb's arrival, and as anxious that Mr. Mathews should be pleased with his friend. Two notes by "Elia" were shown, which Mr. Mathews begged, as additions to his collection of autographs of distinguished persons. The first was addressed to Mr. Coleridge, in reply to his invitation for the day in question. These notes are too characteristic of the writer to be withheld.*

* In a volume of Mr. Coleridge's letters published after his death, one, dated the 3rd of May, mentions this particular occasion in the following words:—"We have a party to-morrow, in which, because we believed it would interest you, you stood included. In addition to a neighbour, Robert Sutton, and ourselves, there will be the Mathews (Mr. and Mrs.); 'At Home' Mathews, I mean, and Charles and Mary Lamb."

May 1st.

To S. T. Coleridge, Esq.

Mr. Gilman's, Highgate.

Dr. C.—I will not fail you on Friday by six, and Mary, perhaps, earlier. I very much wish to meet "Master Mathew," and am much obliged to the G—s for the opportunity. Our kind respects to them. Always, ELIA.

Extract from a MS. note of S. T. C. in my Beaumont and Fletcher, dated April 17th, 1807.

Midnight.

"God bless you, dear Charles Lamb, I am dying; I feel I have not many weeks left."

The second note was addressed—

To J. Gilman, Esq.

Surgeon, Highgate.

Dear Sir,—You dine so late on Friday, it will be impossible for us to go home by the eight o'clock stage. Will you oblige us by securing us beds at some house from which a stage goes to the Bank in the morning? I would write to Coleridge, but cannot think of troubling a dying man with such a request.

Yours truly, C. LAMB.

If the beds in the town are all engaged, in consequence of Mr. Mathews's appearance, a hackney-coach will serve.

Wednesy 2 May, '21.

We shall neither of us come much before the time.

My husband, who was punctuality itself, and all the little party, except the "Elia" and his sister, were assembled. At last Mr. and Miss Lamb appeared, and Mr. Coleridge led his friend up to my husband with a look which seemed to say, "I pray you, like this fellow." Mr. Lamb's first approach was not prepossessing. His figure was small and mean; and no man certainly was ever less beholden to his tailor. His "bran" new suit of black cloth (in which he affected several times during the day to take great pride, and to cherish as a novelty that he had long looked for and wanted) was drolly contrasted with his very rusty silk stockings, shown from his knees, and his much too large thick shoes, without polish. His shirt rejoiced in a wide ill-plaited frill, and his very small, tight white neckcloth was hemmed to a fine point at the ends that formed part of the little bow. His hair was black and sleek, but not formal, and his face the gravest I ever saw, but indicating great intellect,

and resembling very much the portraits of King Charles I. Mr. Coleridge was very anxious about his pet Lamb's first impression upon my husband, which I believe his friend saw; and guessing that he had been extolled, he mischievously resolved to thwart his panegyrist, disappoint the strangers, and altogether to upset the suspected plan of showing him off. The lamb, in fact, would not consent to be made a lion of, and it followed that he became puerile and annoying all the day, to Mr. Coleridge's visible mortification. Before dinner he was suspicious and silent, as if he was taking measure of the man he came to meet, and about whom he seemed very curious. Dinner, however, opened his lips for more than one purpose; and the first glass of wine set his spirit free, and he became quite impracticable. He made the most absurd puns and ridiculous jokes, and almost harassed Coleridge out of his self-complacency, though he managed to maintain a tolerable degree of evenness with his tormentor, now and then only rebuking him mildly for what he termed "such unworthy trifling." This only served to exasperate the perverse humour of him it was intended to subdue; and once Mr. Coleridge exclaimed meekly, after some very bad joke, "Charles Lamb, I'm ashamed of you!"—a reproof which produced only an impatient "You be hanged!" from the reproved, and another jest, "more potent than the former," was superadded to his punning enormities.

Mr. Lamb's last fire, however, was at length expended, and Mr. Coleridge took advantage of a pause to introduce some topic that might divert the party from his friend's determined foolery. He chose a subject which he deemed unlikely, if not impossible, for Lamb to interrupt with a jest. Mr. Coleridge stated that he had originally been intended for the pulpit, and had taken orders—nay, had actually preached several times. At this moment, fancying he saw something in Lamb's face that denoted a lucid interval, and wishing to turn him back from the nonsense which had so "spoiled the pleasure of the time," with a desire also to conciliate the "pouting boy," as he seemed (who, to our observation, was only waiting for an opportunity to revenge himself upon his friend for all the grave checks he had given to his jocular vein during dinner), Coleridge turned benignly towards him, and observed—"Charles Lamb, I believe you never heard me preach?" As if concentrating his pent-up resentment and pique into one focus, and with less of his wonted hesitation, Lamb replied, with great emphasis, "I ne-ever heard you do anything else!"

Our first day with the amiable "Elia" was certainly unlucky. We knew him, however, better in after-time, and coveted and loved his society as much as everybody did who had time given them to know him; but he "would have his humour."

One day Mr. Lamb told us the following story of himself:—He was at one part of his life ordered to the sea-side for the benefit of bathing; but not possessing strength of nerve sufficient to throw himself into the water, he necessarily yielded his small person up to the discretion of two men to "plunge him." On the first morning, having prepared for immersion, he placed himself, not without trepidation, between these huge creatures, meaning to give the previously requisite instructions which his particular case required; but, from the very agitated state he was in, from terror of what he might possibly "suffer" from a "sea-change," his unfortunate impediment of speech became greater than usual; and this infirmity prevented his directions being as prompt as was necessary. Standing, therefore, with a man at either elbow, he began: "I—I—I'm to be di—i—ipped—" The men answered the instruction with a ready "Yes, sir!" and in they soused him! As soon as he rose, and could regain a portion of his lost breath, he stammered out as before, "I—I—I—I'm to be di—i—ipped—" Another hearty "Yes, sir!" and down he went a second time. Again he rose; and then with a struggle (to which the men were too much used on such occasions to heed), he made an effort for freedom; but not succeeding, he articulated as at first, "I—I—I'm to be di—i—ipped—" "Yes, sir!" and to the bottom he went again, when Lamb, rising for the third time to the surface, shouted out in desperate energy, "O—O—only once!"

To Mr. Mathews.

Extempore on rising from my seat at the close of "At Home," on Saturday night:—

If, in whatever decks this earthly ball,
'Tis still great Mother Nature—*one in all!*
Hence Mathews needs must be her genuine son,
A second Nature, that acts ALL IN ONE.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

I have been reducing a few thoughts of my own, excited by my Saturday night's feast, to some sort of shape in my own mind; and, if I should find courage enough to transfer them to paper for your perusal, my principal, if not my sole object will be to rectify, or to confirm my own judgment, by bringing it into contact with the touchstone of your observation and experience. I have seen enough of man-

kind to feel little apprehension of offending you by sincerity, for men are tolerant of blame in proportion as they are secure of admiration; even if I had, as is not the case, found anything in your performance to be censured. But I am not equally confident, that in some of my notices, as to the order of excellence in the different parts of the performance, considered independent of yourself, and even exclusive (and, permit me to say, without suspicion of flattery, that this excludes the very finest parts of the "At Home), I might not offend others, and even give you pain as their friend.

I must therefore bargain, that, as I shall submit what I wrote to no eye but yours, so you will consider the same in the light of a *tête-à-tête* conversation, having this particular advantage, that you may listen to it just at your leisure, or not at all. Be assured that I shall have strangely perverted and misrepresented my own mind and feelings, if you do not recognise in my remarks the unfeigned admiration and regard with which I am,

Dear sir, your obliged S. T. Coleridge.*

My best respects to Mrs. Mathews and to your son.

* The remarks alluded to in the above letter, I regret to say, I have not been able to find.

CHAPTER XXV.

Mr. Mathews's fondness for the society of foreigners—Naldi, Ambrogetti—A new "At Home"—Mr. Mathews's performance in aid of a subscription for the Irish Peasants—Letter from Mr. J. Wilson Croker; portrait of Mrs. Clive—Mr. Mathews's regret at his compact with Mr. Arnold—Causes of the nervous excitability of Mr. Mathews—Proposed engagement with Mr. Price in America—Stipulations with Mr. Arnold—Mr. Mathews's address on taking leave of the London public—Letters to Mr. Mathews from Mr. Elliston and Mr. Macready—Mr. Mathews's performance at Carlton House—Conversation with the King—His Majesty's anecdote of Mr. Kemble—Royal munificence.

My husband was exceedingly fond of the society of foreigners; and it was noticeable that they were all great admirers of him, in public and in private life; they really loved him. Naldi was particularly fond of his society; and, though he understood English imperfectly, seemed always to comprehend all he said. We were very intimate with Signor Naldi, who invariably addressed my husband, "Dear Mat-hew!" Naldi liked to talk English, and was always encouraged in this liking by his friend, who never failed, by his management, to elicit something amusing from the practice. The Prince Regent had made him a present of a snuff-box, in consequence of his singing before him on some occasion. Naldi, who was a refined gentleman in all his ideas, was gratified at this mode of receiving compensation, and wished Mr. Mathews to understand that he was better pleased with the present of the snuff-box (on the lid of which appeared the royal donor's portrait) than he should have been had the Prince given him a thousand pounds! This sentiment he conveyed to my husband the next time they met, in his own peculiar way—"See, dear Mat-hew, dees boox, presente me from de Regent Prince! If I am a tousand pounds I was not so proud as dees boox!"

Ambrogetti's love and admiration had all the character of infantine regard, and used to show itself most amusingly. His English was even worse (or better) than Naldi's, for he had not

mixed so much in English society as Naldi had done, neither had he been so long in this country. One night, at a supper-table, Ambrogetti was seated next my husband, who was much diverted with his ardent admirer, and the childish delight he exhibited at all Mr. Mathews said or did. My husband took pleasure in exciting his droll expressions, and was surprising him with all sorts of things. At last, Ambrogetti, wrought up to the climax of his wonder, having previously exhausted every known word with which he could express his rapture, cried out, in a transport of delight, embracing him at the same moment, "O, Mat-hew! you are my *sweetheart!*"

In March, 1822, Mr. Mathews reappeared at the English Opera House, for the fifth season of his "At Home," in a new entertainment.

MR. MATHEWS AT HOME

at the Theatre Royal, English Opera House, Strand, on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, during March, 1822, with his annual lecture on *Character, Manners,* and *Peculiarities,* under the title of

THE YOUTHFUL DAYS OF MR. MATHEWS.

PART I.—From *nothing* to the age of *an hour and a quarter.*—"First the infant," &c.—Parentage.—Childhood.—From *One* to *Ten.*—"Then the schoolboy with shining morning face."—Preparatory Seminary.—Merchant Tailors' School.—Public Speeches.—Latin, Greek, and English Orations.—Dramatic Mania of Master Charles Mathews.—Parental Objections.

Song—*Trade Choosing.*

From *Ten* to *Fifteen.*—Bound Apprentice, WILKES, Chamberlain of London.—First attempt as an Actor *in Public.*—Fencing.—Interview with MACKLIN; the Veteran's opinion of the qualifications of a Tragedian.—Elopement from Home.—Fat Traveller.—Ap Llywelyn ap Llwyd, Esq.—Mineral Waters.—Stratford upon Avon.—Shakspeare's Tomb.

Song—*Market Day.*

Engaged for the Dublin Theatre.—Careful Carter.—Ingenious Porter.—First Appearance in Ireland.—Splendid Wardrobe.—Mr. Mathers ruffled.—Old HURST.—Cox's Bull.—DICKY SUETT's Letter of Recommendation.—Hibernian Friends, &c. &c. &c.

Song—*An Irish Rubber at Whist.*

PART II.—Dublin Company.—George Augustus Fipley, of the Line of Beauty.—Mr. Trombone.—O'Flanagan.—GEORGE FREDERICK COOKE.—*Port Arms.*

Song—*Volunteer Field-day and Sham Fight.*

Mr. CURRAN (*a portrait*).

Real Irish Ballad—*Crooskeen Lawn.*

Leave Dublin.—Visit Wales.—Mr. Mathews engaged for the York Circuit.—Interview with Tate Wilkinson, Esq., the wandering Patentee.—Buckle-brushing (Garrick's buckles).

Mr. Mathews's Mr. Wilkinson's Mr. Garrick's *Richard.*

Tate's Antipathies:—Rats; Cross Letters.—York *Roscius.*—Overture from London.—Mr. Mark Magnum.—"All that sort of thing," and "Everything in the world."—Arrival in the Metropolis.

Song—*London Green Rooms.*

PART III.—Stories: in which Mr. Mathews will take *steps* to introduce the following characters:—

Nat, Servant of All-work in a Lodging-house.
Sir Shiverum Screwnerve, Guardian to Amelrosa—(*second floor*).
Monsieur Zephyr, French Ballet Master—(*first floor*).
George Augustus Fipley, "A Line of Beauty,"—in love.
Ap Llywelyn ap Llwyd, Esq., *Not* Thin Enough.
Mr. Mark Magnum, *non compos* Lodger (*next door*).
Miss Amelrosa, in love with *Fipley.*

The songs will be accompanied on the piano-forte by Mr. E. Knight, who will play favourite rondos between the parts.

Mr. Mathews gave his performance at the English Opera House on the 21st May, for the purpose of aiding the subscription for the Irish sufferers. In the course of the evening, in that portion of the entertainment where he is enlarging on Irish anecdote, he thus addressed the audience:—

"While upon the subject of Ireland, I am under the necessity of regretting that my humble endeavour in giving my entertainments in aid of the liberal subscription for the distressed peasantry of that country, should not have proved to my feeling quite successful. I wish that there had been a fuller audience than I had ever seen at my nights 'At Home.' I should have sincerely desired, that it had been the best house, instead of the worst, during the many evenings I have had the honour of making you merry here. I am convinced that the public will take the will for the deed; and it gives me some gratification, that though the numbers of the audience have unfortunately decreased, the laughter has not in proportion diminished."

The following letter was written by Mr. Croker* a few days

* The Right Honourable John Wilson Croker, statesman, poet, and quarterly reviewer, born 1780; educated at Dublin University, for which, and originally for Downpatrick, he sat as Member of Parliament. He was one of the earliest writers in the "Quarterly Review," a periodical to which he continued to contribute to his death. He was a bigoted Tory, a violent partisan, and a most malevolent and unscrupulous critic. He died at his seat at West Molesey, in 1857.

after a visit to our cottage. He was kind enough, with many others, to interest himself in my husband's hobby. Soon after this intimation, Mr. Mathews discovered and bought the painting, by Hogarth, of Mrs. Clive, in the "Fine Lady in Lethe," now in his collection at the Garrick Club:—

To C. Mathews, Esq.

Meluny, May 22nd, 1822.

Dear Sir—You may be glad to know that my recollection was correct, and that there is a portrait of Mrs. Clive at Strawberry Hill, by Davidson. There is also another in water-colours, of her, as "the fine lady in Lethe." Perhaps this latter is the original of your engraving. I presume that the portrait by Davidson must have been like, or her friend, Mr. Walpole, would hardly have preserved it.

I am, dear sir, your faithful humble servant, J. W. Croker.

The uniform results of this season's "At Home" proved that Mr. Mathews's name was rising with each fresh occasion; yet he was not satisfied; so tender was his conscience, that he always regarded his precipitancy in the compact with Mr. Arnold as a crime against his family. It certainly was a great mistake, and so far a culpable error that he proceeded in the business without the knowledge of his best friends, who knew his merits too well to have estimated them at his own modest price. This mistake was, however, like every other he committed, the result of an ardent temperament, relying more upon others than himself; quick, confiding, and sudden in his resolves, sincere and liberal in his own motives, he was trusting, to a weakness, in those of others. Yet, in looking back upon the numerous instances of this generous infirmity (which, I own with deep compunction, too much annoyed me at the time), it is no small consolation to me, after more than two years'* constant investigation of his character and conduct, to be unable to detect in his whole life a single blot upon his integrity, or any defect beyond what may be called a foible in his disposition. In relation to that well-known, and too much dwelt upon, "irritability" of temperament, which his death too well accounted for and excused, it may be said that, with every outward appearance of good, nay, robust health (after his twenty-fifth year, till which period he had every symptom of a consumptive habit), and with really a powerful frame, he was in a state of almost continuous bodily suffering from one cause or another, for the most part inexplicable to medical men. In winter his rest was

* These pages were written in the autumn of 1837.

painfully disturbed at night by an irritation on the skin, though without eruption, which allowed him no sleep for weeks together during a frost; he also suffered from a mysterious disorder in his tongue, which for years equally puzzled the faculty, and which, with all their precautionary efforts, "would come when it would come." When we remember the many severe accidents which befel him, and their consequences—that one, in particular, which ever after kept him in a state of perpetual pain—without enumerating any of those occasional and petty ills that "flesh is heir to," or the vast call upon his mental resources and bodily strength in his profession, the surprise at his liability to nervous excitement will cease.

But I wander from my first intention, which was to explain the compunctious visitings which ever and anon caused him to brood over some plan for retrieving his circumstances, and for atoning to his family and himself for what he had done. America was suggested. But such a venture seemed to me nothing short of the risk of life itself, and I steadily refused my consent to his taking the voyage, as indeed I had done several years before, when the "winter of his discontent" at Covent Garden made him turn with eagerness to that land of hope. Fortunately for Mr. Mathews's wishes, he became at this time intimately acquainted with Mr. Price, the proprietor of the New York and other principal theatres in America. Mr. Price's manner and arguments ultimately inspired me with so much confidence in the safety and success of the experiment, and gave me so complete a reliance on his candour as well as judgment, that I relaxed gradually from my first rigid refusal, especially moved as I was by his pledging himself to accompany my husband through "flood and field" in his own country. This last consideration won me totally from my previous objections and fears, and the matter was settled so far as it could be, without the necessary consent of his bond-holder. A visit to America at this time seemed to be as favourable to Mr. Arnold's interest as to Mr. Mathews's, for the next season's "At Home" threatened to be at a stand-still for want of a subject. It was proposed, therefore, by my husband to Mr. Arnold to leave his ground at the English Opera fallow for one year, and to return the next, with materials collected in America for a plentiful harvest. For Mr. Arnold's consent to this reciprocal advantage, he offered to give him an additional season when the present term of engagement should have expired! This did not strike Mr. Arnold as sufficient inducement for the risk he considered that he underwent in

resigning Mr. Mathews to such an experiment as the voyage and the climate to which he purposed to expose himself; and finally, my husband agreed to an eighth season, in addition to the first term, and two thousand pounds besides in money! which sum was to be paid to Mr. Arnold by several instalments during my husband's absence. This was a fearful bargain, and I remember thinking it almost as imprudent as the former. However, my poor husband was sanguine in the extreme, and I endeavoured to be satisfied and to "hope for the best," the usual phrase resorted to when we feel sure of the worst. In fact, I could not but consider such an exorbitant purchase of twelve months' liberty as fatal to the end proposed—namely, that of realizing a larger sum by the experiment than he could gain in London. This great responsibility considered, it appeared highly improbable that he could benefit by his toil and risk further than in seeing a new race of human beings, from whom to glean new characters for his next "At Home," and so it proved. My husband, by concurring events, though brilliantly successful when he did act, lost part of his average receipts by this voyage, and the first sum he forwarded to England was to meet the first instalment due to Mr. Arnold.

All, however, was finally resolved upon, and in June, on the last night of the season, he took leave of the London public in the following address:—

Ladies and Gentlemen,—My task of the evening being finished, it now only remains for me to bid you farewell. This is the last time for many months to come, that I shall have the honour and pleasure of appearing before you. I would fain make you merry at parting, but I feel it impossible to leave such kind friends, even for a time, without a sensation here that prohibits an attempt at a mirthful leave-taking. That I may not therefore throw the same cloud over you which at this moment overshadows me, I will merely entreat that you will not forget me in my absence, and believe that though the Atlantic must part us, it is utterly impossible that I can ever forget how deeply I am indebted to your flattering and unwearied patronage. I trust to be enabled to bring back a new budget for your amusement, and all my powers of observation shall be roused to their utmost to collect such materials in my travels as shall prove that I have not absented myself from your smiles in vain.

As soon as the fact of Mr. Mathews's approaching departure was known, he was gratified by many flattering expressions of strong interest and regard. Among these he received the following note from his school-fellow and early friend, Mr. Elliston:—

To C. Mathews, Esq.

Stratford-place, June 8th, 1822.

My dear Sir,—Do me the favour to let me have a small private box, on one of the evenings of your performance in the ensuing week. I wish to have my impression of your talents left fully on my mind before your departure; and you will bear with you to America my ardent wishes for your prosperity and safe return.

Yours, my dear Sir, very sincerely, R. W. Elliston.

To Mr. C. Mathews.

Berners-street, June 29th, 1822.

My dear Mathews,—The want of opportunity to assure you, with a plausible pretence for entering on so suspicious a subject (for such assurances are either very worthless or very valuable), of my regard and respect for you has for many months pressed more heavily on my patience than I fear a sin would upon my conscience: I therefore leave you to imagine from my past anxiety with what satisfaction I seize the present occasion of expressing to you my regret that our adverse destinies should have afforded me so few opportunities of cultivating your friendship. As it will be long before we can meet again, I have less hesitation than I otherwise might have in declaring to you without the restraint of ceremony, whose language sincerity disowns, my cordial regard and esteem for your character. While I offer you in plain honesty the just tribute (if you think so humble a tribute worth acceptance), I beg you will not take into the account my admiration of your extraordinary talents, in the avowal of which my single voice could not swell one note higher the loud and general chorus of praise that attends upon you; but I request you to believe that I am proud and gratified in acknowledging the sentiments of attachment which the noble and excellent qualities of your heart and mind have excited in me; and in memorial of their truth, I beg leave to request your acceptance of the accompanying picture, which may derive, in your opinion, that value from the artist's genius which the subject is incapable of bestowing.

I am too well aware of my own tendency to prolixity to follow my own wishes by prolonging my letter, and as I prefer even the cold language of courtesy to that which may be construed as adulatory, I will relieve you from farther tediousness, trusting your own warmth of heart with the credit due to my assertion, that your success and happiness in our own or more distant countries is equally interesting to me, and that

I am, dear Mathews, your faithful friend, W. C. Macready.

A fine painting by Jackson, now in the Garrick Club, of Mr. Macready in the dying scene of Henry IV., accompanied this most gratifying and valued letter.

Previously to his going to America, Mr. Mathews was once more commanded to revisit Carlton House, and perform his "Youthful Days," where the same attentions as before and the same gratifying results followed—nay, the same rooms (not the dust and broom) were prepared for him. This performance, like the former, was also to a select party.

Between the acts the King conversed with Mr. Mathews as on the previous occasion, and commented with great judgment upon all that he had done. He told him, however, that he thought his imitation of Curran the least successful of any he did. This at first surprised and disappointed Mr. Mathews, until he recollected and suggested to his Majesty that his imitation was given in Mr. Curran's public manner, which was widely different from him at other times. The King observed, "True; I never heard him in public. I have only known him in private life." Mr. Mathews then gave a specimen of Curran in society, at which the King was delighted, and exclaimed, "O, excellent! excellent, indeed! I am glad I objected to what you first did, for it has drawn forth the proof that your observation and powers are unerring. Your imitation is perfect—perfect."

The King then talked of Mr. Kemble, and said "Your Kemble is excellent, whether on or off the stage. I used to fancy my own imitation of him very true. I had a great regard for Kemble; he was my very good friend. I'll suffer no one to speak a word against Kemble." The King then remarked upon Mr. Kemble's correct pronunciation of the English language, and the natural horror he felt at any distortion of it. This led to my husband's relating a story of the tragedian's correcting a servant one night at Lord North's. The gentlemen staying later over their wine than usual, a footman informed Mr. Kemble that "the carriage was waiting, and that Mrs. Kemble had desired him to say she had got the rheumatiz." After a minute's pause, Kemble turned to the man, and, deliberately taking a pinch of snuff, said, "Tell Mrs. Kemble that I'll come, and another time, sir, do you say 'tism.'" The King laughed loudly at this anecdote, and observed, "O, it is so like him! I can relate a story of the same kind, which will prove that he could not abstain from such corrections, whether it was a servant or a prince who offended his nice ear. One evening, after he had dined with me, perceiving, in the course of conversation, that Kemble carried his finger round his snuff-box, evidently in distress at its emptiness, I held out my own, silently inviting him to partake of its con-

tents, when he exclaimed, 'Is it possible! Does a prince offer his box to a poor player?' I replied, 'Yes; and if you will take a pinch from it you will much *obleege* me.' Kemble paused for a moment, then bowed stiffly, and, dipping his finger and thumb into the box, replied, 'I accept your Royal Highness's offer with gratitude; but, if you can extend your royal jaws so wide, pray, another time, say *oblige*.' And I did so ever after, I assure you. Oh, I'm under vast obligations to my friend Kemble!"*

At the close of the evening the Prince graciously took leave of my husband with much kindness of manner, and expressed a wish that his approaching voyage might prove safe and prosperous.

It is, I believe, perfectly well known that Mr. Mathews never accepted pecuniary advantage for any exercise of his talents induced by friendly solicitation in private, or as a matter of courtesy in the society of persons of rank. If he had chosen thus to let himself out he might long ago have retired upon a fortune so obtained; but his gentlemanlike pride and independent spirit precluded his receiving any remuneration for his talents, except in the way of his profession. One instance of royal munificence (not to be rejected by a subject), however, has fallen in my way—the only one that has escaped destruction from the monthly sacrifice made by my husband. This is so agreeably expressed, and so characteristic of the royal kindness from which it emanated, that I cannot resist inserting it here.

To C. Mathews, Esq.

Mr. Robt. Gray begs leave to inform Mr. Mathews that he has received the King's commands for issuing one hundred guineas from the privy purse, in token of the pleasure his Majesty had derived from Mr. Mathews's superior excellency in the line of his profession; which sum will be most readily paid by Mr. Gray upon his being favoured with Mr. Mathews's receipt for the amount.

Duchy of Cornwall, Somerset-place, 9th July, 1822.

* I remember another instance of the same kind. When Mr. Kemble acted in York as "a star," staying in the house of Tate Wilkinson, Mr. Mathews called there on some pretence, for the sake of being near the great actor. On entering the room, Mr. Kemble was sitting at the further end of it, seemingly absorbed in reading. Mrs. Wilkinson, a broad Yorkshire woman, inquired of Mr. Mathews as he entered, whether he did not find the streets bad to walk in, telling him that Mr. Kemble had been out, and had assured her they were very *slippy*. Mr. Kemble, evidently ear-wounded by the word, slightly shook his head, without any other movement, and, as if unconscious that his correction was audible, muttered, "*Slippery—slippery—slippery!*"

CHAPTER XXVI.

Mr. Mathews's departure for New York—His letters from America.

In August Mr. Price accompanied us to Liverpool, whence he and my husband were to take their passage to New York. I will pass over all the hopes and fears of this parting. The travellers sailed, and Charles and I returned slowly and pensively back to town, to await with intense anxiety the first letter announcing Mr. Mathews's escape from the perils I so dreaded to think upon. During the interim I had not been allowed to read a newspaper. The first intelligence, therefore, of my husband came from his own hand.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Hoboken, near New York, Sept. 6th, 1822.

I have the pleasure of announcing to you my safe arrival in New York harbour last night, after a most delightful passage of thirty-five days. During the whole time I was not even qualmish for one moment. So far from the most distant approximation to sickness, the effect of the sea air produced only the most fierce and unconquerable craving after food. In short hunger was my only disease. We had eleven cabin passengers,—only one female, the captain's wife; an old colonel in the army of '69, a regular built Methodist, whether preacher or not we could not discover; five young Americans, who had been sent by their relatives to improve themselves abroad, and who had been in Paris, Italy, and England, and of course furnished ample materials for pleasant conversation; a Yorkshire cloth dealer; and a strange compound mixture of gentleman and blackguard, whose origin, connexions, and profession remained a mystery to the last, but whose constant anxiety seemed to proceed from the dread of being one moment sober, his unremitting labour to keep himself equally intoxicated, and who was never better than in a state of sober tipsiness,—yet the most violent feeling which he excited was pity; for he was never offensive or troublesome, and submitted with the greatest good humour to the perpetual tricks we played him. The Colonel, a mixture of *Longbow* and *Prolix*, was a butt—the Methodist a victim. These, with cards, backgammon, chess, and reading, filled up our time very agreeably. The weather was delightful during the whole passage, not more than about two days'

rain, and never of long duration. We had two squalls only, of about half an hour each; one accompanied by a thunderstorm and tremendous lightning, which gave me a tolerable specimen of what a gale might be; for a regular gale it was not allowed to be by those who had crossed the Atlantic before. However, it was quite sufficient to satisfy my ambition. The weather was intensely hot during the latter part of the passage, and only admitted of dressing-gowns. I enjoyed invariable health and spirits; and was never better in health in my life than I am at this moment. We were within three hundred miles of New York on the twenty-seventh day; and had the wind been fair, we might easily have accomplished the passage in two days more, which, at this time of the year, would have been accounted a quick passage. We were, however, becalmed three or four days in succession, and were eight days in performing it. So much for my voyage and safe arrival. And now, my dearest wife, I am arrived at a painful period, for I cannot conceal from you that, from the moment of my arrival in the bay, I have suffered a dreadful reverse of the cheerfulness I had hitherto enjoyed. This, however, has arisen chiefly, indeed entirely, on your account. Of course you must have heard, long before this will reach you, the news which, when first communicated to me, shocked and appalled me—that the yellow fever had made its appearance in New York.* The intelligence was abruptly conveyed to us by a fisherman, who came alongside in the bay, with the most ignorant and shameful exaggerations. You may imagine my sensations—I cannot describe them: but quick as lightning I thought of the effect the account of this calamity would have upon you. If, within twenty miles of the spot, we should hear the most absurd reports of facts so easily ascertained, how naturally would they be magnified at the distance of three thousand! Then, again, the idea of your hearing it a month at least before I could have an opportunity of giving you any consolation on the subject, agitated and distressed me beyond measure. These were my first and most painful impressions. For my own part, I am now as completely satisfied that no danger exists, as I am that you are free from it at Highgate, or that the pens I am writing with are a great torment. For God's sake, my dearest wife, calm your agitation if you have not heard the truth; though even that I am sensible will make you wretched. Receive this assurance from me, that on my most sacred word of honour, the danger is past; after six weeks' sickness and alarm, the Board of Health reported yesterday only two cases, both doubtful, and these in a population of one hundred and thirty thousand souls. This is the third visitation in nineteen years. The disease is confined to one part of the city, called the infected district; and no one case has occurred out of those bounds. The magistrates have caused all the inhabitants of this district to remove and shut up their houses; and fences have been erected across the streets to prevent all communication. By this

* This I had not heard, thanks to the watchful kindness of some friends, who had contrived, with the connivance of my servants, to keep every newspaper and other reports of the calamity from my knowledge.

means the progress of the fever has been stopped; and though a great panic has been struck, and numbers have fled, yet I understand, from every person I have seen, that in those parts of the city which are declared healthy, business goes on as cheerfully as before, and no alarm is felt. The Board of Health publish reports daily. Price went on shore last night; I remained on board; and all but three of us followed Price's example. They came to us again this morning, and declared all danger past. However, I resolved not to enter the city until all the inhabitants are again settled and perfect health restored. I am laughed at for my fears; but I owe it to you and dear Charles to avoid all possibility of risk. This morning, therefore, I crossed the river in a steamboat, to the most romantic and beautiful village, whence I date this, and luckily found a lodging in a detached house. I then went back to the vessel, and here George and I are snug from all alarm and danger.* We have an arm of the sea, about four miles across, between us and the most healthy part of New York, and seven from the diseased district. The theatre opened on Monday; but I rather think I shall go to Boston or Philadelphia, and defer my performance here; for every other town in the United States is free from disease. As I must despatch this to-morrow, I cannot possibly speak decisively until my next letter, which will leave this on the 16th; but be assured that no power or persuasion shall induce me to go near New York until I can go with that kind of confidence that would induce you to give me your consent. Pray be cautious to shut your ears against all reports,—mine is Gazette authority; beware of newspapers. The fisherman reported that one hundred and forty had died in twenty-four hours, and that no one had recovered who had sickened; and he lives only twenty-five miles from the city. Here, from the bills of mortality, and the official returns of those who dare not deceive, I have ascertained, that in six weeks only eighty persons have died out of one hundred and thirteen thousand, and not fifty of them of the fever, and that numbers have recovered who had been infected. The first frosty night entirely eradicates it, which is pretty sure to occur in September, and it never makes its appearance after that month.

C. Mathews.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Philadelphia, Sept. 12th, 1822.

I have the pleasure to inform you, that I have made an arrangement by which I avoid New York altogether until November, and thereby keep entirely clear of the remotest possibility of danger. All other parts of the United States are healthy. On Sunday last I received a summons from Price, to follow him to Bristol, seventy miles from New York. I arrived there on Monday evening, and found him at Cooper's

* George, his servant.

house,* where I was made very welcome. He is away until next Saturday; but Mrs. Cooper and Mrs. Price made me very comfortable. They are both very charming women. Cooper's house is after my own heart, delightfully situated on the banks of the Delaware. If I were not a salamander I should, for once, confess that the sun could be hot enough for me. The Americans, "unto the manner born," are astonished at my bearing the climate so well. The thermometer is to-day ninety degrees, and not a puff of air. They are all panting; but I am not at all distressed, excepting in the night, and then I suffer. It is not possible to bear the least covering. The mosquitoes have not yet attacked me, therefore I think I shall escape, as I do at home, with your enemies the gnats. Price came down this morning mad. He declared that two millions of mosquitoes had kept him awake all night. We arrived here on Wednesday, per steamboat, twenty miles in two hours and a half. The manager of the theatre had sent an offer to me, and I therefore came over here to meet him, as the conveyance is so pleasant. A new and beautiful theatre is nearly finished here, in place of the old one destroyed by fire. I have made an engagement to play at Baltimore, under the same manager. In a few days I shall commence, but to-morrow return to Bristol, to spend a few days with Cooper previously to my journey. Baltimore is a hundred and twenty miles hence. I shall be able to announce my arrival, and further particulars, by the next packet. Hitherto I am so much in amazement lost, that I dare not trust myself to give an opinion of the people, or venture to say whether I like or dislike them. It appears to me, that the lower orders must necessarily prevent a European from being comfortable, if he has not made up his mind very resolutely to look on, laugh, and thoroughly despise. If this be the effect of a republican form of government, give me a monarch, even if he be a despot. For a specimen:—I had taken a jaunt in a steamboat with a fellow-passenger to New Brunswick; but, a wretched inn, an independent landlord, who took a chair and sat down while we were at breakfast, with his hat on, hospital beds, &c., drove us away on Sunday morning to Elizabeth Town, fifteen miles on our road back to Hoboken. There are no post-chaises here, nor any mode of travelling but steam or stage-coaches, excepting occasionally an innkeeeper happens to have a carriage. This was the case at Brunswick, and we were forwarded to Elizabeth Town. When we drove up to the door no soul came out to greet us, though the landlord and waiter were sitting in the hall cheek by jowl, see-sawing upon chairs—a favourite mode here. We entered the house and passed them. At length we ascertained which was mine host. He shook us both by the hand, and said to each, "How d'ye do? I have seen you before?" "Can we have beds here?" "I guess you can." At night I was stretched on a wretched straw mattrass, but was awoke at four o'clock, before daylight, by mine host, who said he had a letter

* Mr. Cooper, the American tragedian, with whom we had had such friendly intimacy at Liverpool in 1804.

for me. You may judge of my amazement, for I was confident when I went to bed that the fellow did not know my name; however, he had guessed, and found me out. The letter proved to be from Price, who had sent a carriage to Brunswick for me, having heard that I was there. The driver came on in the mail to Elizabeth Town, and, on arrival, Boniface would call me up.

When I got up I agreed to go to Price, in the machine in which I came, which had rested there all night. When I was ready, the driver said to the one who had been despatched for me, "Will you go inside or out?" and the fellow, with a segar in his mouth, actually hesitated whether he should sit by my side or the driver's. In short, all the Whites of the order are born blackguards, and the Blacks, *scent* per cent. above them in being *genteel*—a favourite word here. The driver took up a book that I had laid down on the seat, and began to read in it, without the least symptom of apology. There is not the slightest show of civility with them; a bow or a touch of the hat I have not seen once, or heard the words "thank ye" once used upon payment. As to the higher order, for there are but two, what I can gather from a party with whom I dined yesterday is, that they differ but little from the English in either manner or customs. They are natural, easy, and polite; and you will not dislike them from hearing that they are most anxious to show me great attention. About twelve of the first people in Philadelphia gave me a splendid dinner yesterday on my arrival, though I had left my letters of introduction at New York.

C. MATHEWS.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Baltimore, Sept. 28th, 1822.

I arrived here on Saturday morning last, and made my *debût* on the American stage on Monday, Sept. 23, with the "Trip to Paris." Nothing could be more enthusiastic and cheering than my reception. I was a little embarrassed at first, as I always am, at great applause: it affected me, and with difficulty I made my exordium. The first song, you know, is not calculated for great effect; and deep attention was all my repayment for some minutes after my commencement. When I came to the ballad-singer and his pupil, "London now is out of Town," which is their own national air, I looked upon my business as done in America. They roared and screeched as if they had never heard anything comical before; and I don't think they have been glutted in that way.

I discovered the never-to-be-mistaken token of pocket handkerchiefs crammed into the mouths of many of the pittites. I had only to hold up my crooked finger when I wanted them to laugh, and they obeyed my call. I was most agreeably surprised, indeed, at finding them an audience of infinitely more intelligence and quickness than I had expected. Bartley had shrugged his shoulders at the idea of their taking the jokes. One of the London papers said I should be lost

here; and most people supposed that I should find them dull; and so they are in private, I suspect—*tarnation* heavy and grave, but not so in the theatre. The neatest and best points were never better appreciated, even in London; and I am quite certain from the effects, that the French language is much more generally understood here than in England. They have a much larger proportion of French people, for the size of their towns, than we have, and every bit of broken English is a sure hit.

I repeated the "Trip to Paris" on the second night; and, last night, "The Country Cousins" went gloriously. The whole lower circle was crammed; but only those who could go in coaches could attend, of course. The first night there were eight hundred dollars in the house, and my share came to 50*l.* sterling. In my next I shall be able to tell you the results of my seven nights' engagement, which is an experimental one. The three great towns—Boston, Philadelphia, and New York, are the marts where I am to make my money. In the mean time we will not object to 50*l.* per night; which sum Price offered me certain, and I was advised to refuse. The imperial and important fact I have ascertained—that they can taste and feel my humour, and that I have made a great hit. The papers, which are very numerous here, and have taken me up with a high hand, will send my fame before me through the States. I was very anxious and doubtful, and looked upon the first night here to be one of the most important in my theatrical life. It is over, and well over; and I have no doubt, from its effects, that my utmost hopes will be realized. Wood, the manager, is quite a gentleman, and him only have I yet seen. I had only one letter to Baltimore; and the person to whom it is addressed is not at home. Price I have left at Bristol, but will send your letter to him. You see I have followed your example in the size of my sheet, though I hardly hope to fill it.

I rejoice as the hours fly that you are nearer getting my first letter. The most serious part of the appalling news of the fever was the effect I feared the first report might have upon you, and the distressing suspense, of perhaps three or four weeks, in which you would be kept. I hope by the end of next week my letter will have reached you, and from that time the communication will be more regularly kept up.

C. Mathews.

To Mrs. Mathews.

New York, Nov. 7th, 1822.

Here I am at last; and, thank God, health and confidence are restored here. This is really a delightful city, with as much bustle as London or Paris; but bearing a greater resemblance to Dublin in many particulars than to the former. The want of handsome equipages and well-dressed persons is particularly striking to an Englishman. At present it is a scene of the greatest possible noise and confusion. I believe I explained to you that there was a part of the city only that

had been declared infected. From this part the whole of the inhabitants fled. Imagine the effect of the Strand from Bedford-street, all Charing cross, Cockspur-street, Haymarket, and so on, across to Covent Garden, being entirely depopulated; and then these persons all returning on a sudden to their dwellings; their furniture, which had been taken to different country dwellings, and to distant parts of the city, all being brought back. You may then fancy what I am now witnessing. The bustle is very cheering to the natives, as it proclaims the return of health and business; but it is very distressing to me, for the noise is overpowering. I arrived here on Saturday evening last, after a three-days' ride from Philadelphia, ninety miles, which I performed with ease in half an hour less than the given time, as I found Price's dinner ready in that time after my arrival. This month is particularly delightful here: it is what is called their Indian summer. Very seldom is a cloud to be seen, and no fogs. For the last ten days it has been all sunshine, and a perfectly clear sky; and you know what a blessing that is for me. The nights, to be sure, are cold. When the really hard weather sets in, which they say is much more severe than ours, I shall suffer, for here all are wood fires, and to these I never can be reconciled. You have been in Paris only in summer, and therefore you do not know this horror. The want of cheerfulness and civility is striking, and the egregious folly of the middle and lower orders in their fancied independence, is calculated to produce a smile of thorough contempt rather than anger. It consists in studied sullenness, the determination never to be civil or apparently kind to a fellow-creature, and not to bow, or say thank ye, to a person they know to be their superior, for they affect not to believe in it. The upper orders (for there *are* upper orders, and must be, though it is not allowed here) either like it, or are compelled to submit to it. I cannot quite make up my mind which is the real case. The manager of a theatre tells me that it is not in his power to induce the lamplighter or carpenter, when he walks into the green-room before ladies, to take off his hat, and this is allowed, and must be submitted to, they tell me. No carriages are closed here in summer (nor in winter, I should think), and the driver will smoke a segar, and a lady dares not ask him to desist, though the smoke blinds her, because the odds are, that he will say he has a right to smoke, and every man must do as he likes in an independent state. A few days before I left Baltimore I travelled in a stage coach a short distance. The coachman, an awkward, dirty, cadaverous-looking hound, that would be thought too shabby for a stable-boy in England, turned round to the passengers (for the driving-seat is a part of the coach, and not an elevated box, as with us), and said, "Has anybody got any tobacco, for I'm out?" "I chew, sir," said a passenger. "Give me a bit, will you? Thank'ye, *General*." "Judge,* will you have a quid? I got plenty now." A fact! I have seen this *General* since in company, and, "barring" the quid, really a gentleman by education and travel, fit for any society. I

* Judge Johnson, of Orleans, and a member of the Congress.

ventured to ask him how he could endure such familiarity? and added, that persons of his rank appeared to me to cherish and encourage what is distinctly offensive to foreigners. He replied, "All such men have votes."

I need not say what a feast it was to me to receive two large packets the moment I arrived on Saturday night. I am quite delighted with the plan of your journal: it is a happy thought, and I am very grateful to you for your kind anxiety to amuse me. Pray continue on the same plan. Price has offered to ensure 75*l.* per night, an advance of 25*l.* This looks well; but still I take my chance of my shares, better or worse. Price, and Mrs. Price too, beg all sorts of kind things may be said to you in return for yours to them.

If you see Miller, tell him I have got a lodging on the English plan at New York. I told him I never would board, if I starved, but he assured me I must. Tell him I never have, and never will. I am informed, that out of a population of a hundred and twenty thousand I am the only person who has got a lodging to himself. In short the only person who can be alone if he wishes it; and I do wish it, and never enjoyed solitary pleasure so luxuriously as here. God bless and preserve you and dear Charles, for the sake of him who loves you more and more as time goes on.

Ever, ever affectionately yours, C. MATHEWS.

To Mrs. Mathews.

New York, Nov. 15th, 1822.

I have had the pleasure of receiving a few pages more of your journal; and I am more than delighted at the cheerful tone of it, and find that "the first fit of blues" is not recorded until the middle of September. I am now familiarized to the subject, and understand the mysteries and peculiarities of the yellow fever, which only a residence on the spot can possibly make one acquainted with. The impression that we Europeans have of its contagious qualities is, that it is like the plague. Now the fact is, that out of one hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants (to be sure a great proportion fled), only twenty-eight died. You may remember that I gave you an account of a poor victim in the ship, of whom we made sport, who was constantly in a state of intoxication. He was panic-struck about the fever; and when I got the only bed that was vacant at Hoboken, on the opposite shore, he begged hard to be taken into the same house. When I fled to Bristol, I sent George to him to say he might have my bed. He lived only three weeks; he had, it is true, undermined his constitution. They swear here that it was not the fever; but if it was not, he died of fright. From that hour America has been to me a large hospital; and all conversation a mere medical report. I had been in Baltimore more than a fortnight before I found that the yellow fever existed there stronger than in New York, and with more fatal consequences; forty-five, forty, and thirty-five deaths occurring in three succeeding weeks.

What think you of this? Was it not enough to appal me? One-half of the actors were ill of ague, which they brought from Washington; so that I was surrounded by "horrors and distraction." It really was melancholy. Had poor Charley been here, he could not have survived, or any body of such constitution. Thanks to a good one, and a rigid adherence to my plan of diet, I lay like Manly on the wreck of the Apollo, and saw my comrades dying around me. "What could induce you to come here, Sir, during our sickness?" was consoling to hear; but this assailed me on every side. The simple fact was, that the newspapers which do and will govern everything, announced the yellow fever at New York with exaggeration, but artfully concealed the disease at Baltimore under the title of "bilious malignant," which did not prevent strangers from visiting them. It was marvellous that with this drawback, my theatrical success was so great. It would have been double, doubtless, but for the sickness. The loss has been great to me; but I have escaped, thank God! and have never had one moment's illness since I arrived. No language, however, can describe to you the wretched effect of the regular report of relations, friends, &c. at Washington. I inquired for Mr. Law, a nephew of Lord Ellenborough, to whom I had a letter. Knocked at the door,—"Oh! my master's dead!" Inquired for Mr. Paterson, to whom I had a letter from Washington Irving,—"Out of town." Engaged to dine with Mrs. Paterson, in his absence,—excuse stated, the "sister dead!" "General Ridgley's compliments to Mr. Mathews—honour of his company to dinner on Friday." Friday arrives,—"General Ridgley's compliments,—sorry, but the death of his daughter prevents," &c. On my return from Washington, I actually went, letter in hand, to Mr. Paterson,—"Oh! Sir, my master died last night!" I will close here. You will understand what I have felt. 'Tis now over; but be satisfied of this, that this disease never existed in July, August, or September, and from this month the climate is very healthy. The present month is particularly delicious,—warm nights and Italian days. The sun is now shining with splendour and brightness, without a cloud, and no heat.

Now to turn to the bright part of the picture. I have made my appearance here, and have made a prodigious hit. Price has just shown himself a capital politician. You know how I fought against appearing in the regular drama, and had determined, up to the time I saw him in Baltimore, that I would not be moved from my fixed resolve. The Baltimore audience, however, were noisy, and they drove me from my table, and I took to the drama in despair; for I was out of heart, out of humour, and out of pocket. So I acted *Duberly** and the "*Polly Packet*,"—*Solomon Gundy*,† and "*Dilligence*," *Monsieur Tonson*. I think I told you I had acted with great effect,—certainly one of my very best efforts in or out of the legitimate line. Well, Price saw me act *Goldfinch* and *Tonson* one night, and came round and said, "Those Sir, are the two parts you open in at New York; they have seen nothing

* *Lord Duberly*, in "The Heir at Law."
† In "Who wants a Guinea?"

like your *Goldfinch*,* Sir, and it must be so." I gave way; for to say truth, I had doubts that all American audiences were like Baltimore; and in that case I had long secretly determined to embark at New York, and sneak home again. Nothing, however, can be more complete than the contrast,—nothing more brilliant and decisive than my success. I opened to the greatest stock house ever known,—much greater than that of Cooke or Kean. Nearly 1800 dollars! My reception was more than rapturous; I never recollect anything more joyous in my life. They infused me with fun; I was in tip-top spirits; and the songs were hailed with shouts. The *Tonson* was equal in effect to the most successful of my former personations; and at the dropping of the curtain, huzzas cheered my efforts. This was an important night, as you say, and I am sorry that it was not the second communication, as you anticipated; but I am content. The whole tone of my future proceedings will be taken from this night. This is the London of America; and I was forced to play at Doncaster first. All the places were taken for my benefit. Therefore Price calculated cleverly, that to begin the entertainments until my second engagement, would be throwing them away. I have my benefit on the eighth night,—then make a fresh engagement with all my novelty. Now we have had 1600 dollars to "The Heir-at-Law," and second night of *Tonson*. Rely upon it, the business is done, and my expedition will be completely successful. Of the loss of time we must not think.

Love to dear Charles; and say how I rejoice that he has obtained the Delphin Classics. I beg that he may be indulged to his wish in such pursuits, during my absence. God bless you both, prays daily your truly affectionate

C. Mathews.

To Mrs. Mathews.

New York, Nov. 23rd, 1822.

I have so frequently written in high-flowing terms of my success in my tours, that I have almost exhausted every term of surprise or admiration; but *this is* the most extraordinary hit I have ever made. Last night I had my first benefit, and I shall always think it the greatest compliment ever paid me. The torrents of rain which fell during the whole day (and we in England don't know what rain is) would have totally destroyed the house in any town in which I have ever been. I had to wait for a hackney coach until the time I ought to have been on the stage; but walking was out of the question, as nothing short of drowning appeared inevitable. It was thought by all that it would injure the house very materially, as scarcely any private carriages are kept here. When I went in, to my great surprise as well as delight, Price said, "Well, sir, here they are. Your house is full. This is the greatest compliment ever paid to an actor in New York. I don't

* In "The Road to Ruin."

believe that there is any other man that would have had such a house as this on such a night." There were 1800 dollars, which is nearly as much as the house will hold. The rain must have done some injury, else it would have overflowed, instead of being full, and I believe that is all the difference. No enthusiasm ever was greater. Price has shown his judgment greatly in this engagement. I told you in my last the origin of my taking to the drama. The entertainments were asked for every day at the box-office, and the cry you *must* give them, or the houses will fall off; and on the sixth night, a wet night, too, we had 1400 dollars to *Goldfinch*, the second time, and *Tonson*, the third time. Price justly said, "Should we not be fools to throw away our strength, when they come in this way to very weakness?" Well, I must do one of them for my own night. On Wednesday I start with the "Trip to Paris." The eventful period of which you were so anxious to hear is arrived; it is properous beyond our hopes. I look upon the remainder of my work as a settled point. All other towns will take their tone from this, as in England from London; and the curiosity to see me is such that Cooper and Phillips, the only stars excepting Booth, say that they fail because the people are hoarding up their dollars to see me. I send you a copy of a few lines in the newspaper of Wednesday.

A very handsome compliment has been paid to Mathews, such as cannot be soon forgotten by him. We learn that a party of gentlemen have chartered the steam-boat, *The Fly*, to bring them down from Albany (two hundred miles) to his benefit to-morrow evening; thus making a journey, to and fro, of four hundred miles, to be gratified in witnessing his powers for one evening.

Another unsought puff caught my eye:—

The proprietors of the Brooklyn boat inform the public, that the steam-vessels *Fulton* and *Active* will, on the occasion of Mr. Mathews's benefit, start from Brooklyn at half-past five, and remain to carry the passengers back after the play.

These boats never cross the ferry after five on other occasions. Does not this look well? This morning I read:—

Dr. Hosack informs the medical students that, in consequence of the tempest last night, which compelled him to postpone his lectures, &c.

I now send the receipts of the eight nights; and I think, and Price says he is sure of it, the next will keep up to the mark.

	DOLLARS.
Road to Ruin—Tonson	1700
Poor Gentleman—Sleepwalker	962
Heir-at-Law—Tonson	1401
Who Wants a Guinea?—Killing No Murder	1178
Henry IV.—Lying Valet	1214
Road to Ruin—Tonson	1420
Beaux Stratagem—Actor of All Work	1287
Wild Oats—Do. Do.	1800

Let this suffice until we meet. Be satisfied, though, you understand it, and the dollars may dazzle you too much (444 dollars are 100*l.* observe). I have received above 800*l.* for my eight nights!! This is superior to anything I ever did out of London. I have gained 25*l.* per night by sharing.

C. Mathews.

To Mrs. Mathews.

New York, Dec. 7th, 1822.

The cold is intense, and I am told it is nothing to what may be expected. We have already had snow enough to spoil one or two of my houses. However, an indifferent house will yield me nearly 50*l.* sterling. My own entertainments do not hit here so well as at Baltimore; the general belief is, that they are too local for Americans, who have not visited Europe, to understand. This would, however, have equally applied at Baltimore. The truth is, the theatre is too large for the effects. Price has shown himself an admirable politician. Had I commenced with my entertainment, I am convinced my attraction afterwards would not have been what it is now; and my feelings are by no means hurt that here they think me an actor—"a very natural actor, and the only comedian that has ever been seen in America that was not extravagant." The word mimic has never been flung in my teeth; and without songs or imitations, or any of those extra aids, which even in Edinburgh I required, I can draw a house. That *Goldfinch* and *Tonson* are good for 1500 dollars is a bet *now* (when I return).

I finish my second engagement here on Friday next, to a great house (this is already settled), and then, I believe, go to Boston. I am very much pleased with the society of New York, and gradually like it better. I have seen nothing but the upper ranks lately, and they are very delightful people. The woman with whom I lodge is the widow of an Englishman, and therefore knows all our habits. The servants are negroes, and therefore I have no dealings with the sulky-looking Yankee. I do not even buy my own gloves—the shopkeepers are so very angry when you purchase anything of them.

If you ever see the Bartleys, who are engaged, I hear, at Covent Garden, pray say to them how much I am delighted with Dr. Hosack and his family: they are the real sterling goods, and I am quite at home with them. They ask me to entertain me—to afford me quiet repose after my labours. "*My* children, you must not talk to Mr. Mathews; he talks too much in public to be disposed to answer all your questions." This is rare, and I value it.

C. Mathews.

To Mrs. Mathews.

New York, Dec. 15th, 1822.

The great pleasure I felt in receiving your letters was much damped by the melancholy tone of expression respecting my situation. It is curious enough that on the 9th of October I dreamed about you, or had a sort of vision of your being very unhappy, or ill, or that something very distressing had happened; but the effect your expression of countenance produced on me (when silently you shook your head as if you dreaded to inform me of the worst), was such that I could scarcely speak at breakfast, I was so wretchedly out of spirits. Price laughed, but Mrs. Price felt very kindly for me; and knowing that I had not then heard from home, sympathized with me. I requested her to make a memorandum of the date, and I find it was the evening when Elizabeth had first so abruptly mentioned the yellow fever to you.*

I was nearly a fortnight in Baltimore before I discovered that the yellow fever was raging in one part of that city; for, mysterious as it is, it is certain that the infection is always confined to districts. I first discovered it by Wood, the manager, twice refusing to show me a part of the town I was curious to see. He refused peremptorily to walk that way; and I then said, "Well, I suppose you won't prevent my walking there alone. There is a turn in the river in that part so beautifully romantic, that I will have a walk there." "For God's sake, don't go near it!" he cried; and then the murder was out. "It is not healthy," and so on. The same pains were taken to keep the news from me that, in a more friendly way, was practised towards you. Dr. Pattison, a Scotsman, with whom I was intimate at Baltimore, said that he had watched me narrowly; and, finding from my health and habits, that I was not a subject for it, believing also firmly that the disease was not infectious, and that it was certainly confined to a part of the city, a mile and a half from that part in which I lived, he thought it better to keep the fact from me as long as possible, as fear alone will sometimes occasion disease.

The folly and weakness of people here about the fever can hardly be described. An Irishman will as willingly confess that Dublin is a dirty place, as an American that the yellow fever is of native origin,—it is a sore point; it is next to an affront, even to Price, to say it is contagious. Nay, the humbug is kept up for effect even in letters written to England. Price was sent for post-haste to New York. He met me afterwards at Philadelphia. three days after his time. I received a letter informing me that Simpson† was ill of the pleurisy. On his arrival, I said, "Well, has Simpson got over the fever?" "Who said he had the fever, sir? It is not true, sir." Nothing could annoy him so much. Not forty-eight hours after, Mrs. Price said, "I am astonished, Mr.

* My maid, who could not resist preparing me for the contents of her master's first letter, as she delivered it, by revealing her previous knowledge respecting the fever.

† Mr. Price's partner.

Price, you should join in that absurd deception that the fever is not infectious?" "I do say so still," said he; and in an unguarded moment, in heat of argument, said afterwards to my great triumph, "Was I not almost two days by Simpson's bedside, who had it as bad as man could, and did I catch it?" Yet does he write to Miller that it has been greatly exaggerated! The company were all cautioned to read pleurisy for fever. It was marvellous that the people could be induced to go to the theatre. I suffered horribly by it, as you may imagine; but I may without vanity say that I was the only person now living who could have brought houses during the calamity. You can have no notion of the wretchedness of the scene and its associations; or the coolness with which it is treated here. They die at twelve o'clock on Tuesday, and in twenty-four hours afterwards they are buried; and all sensation appears to cease with the friends of the parties. Twice I knocked at doors with letters of Washington Irving in my hand—"Mr. Paterson at home?" "I guess he died last night!" "Mr. —— at home?" the same answer. Ten people at Baltimore said angrily to me, "Who told you Robert Paterson died of yellow fever?" I could have said, the physician who attended him, who laughs at your self-deception, but dares not avow it. "I hope you will come to Washington: our city is quite healthy," said several. I went; George was attacked with fever and ague the moment he arrived there. It was the most unhealthy of all the United States. Can you conceive such folly? An English surgeon, who introduced himself to me, again was the exposer. "Take my advice, sir, and don't stay here long." This was on the second night of my performance. On the morning after, for the first time, I felt queer. It was nervousness, I now know. Mr. Burke accompanied me in the Adolphus line. I went to George's bedside at nine in the morning. Such a spectacle! "Have you courage to be moved?" "Oh! yes, sir." "Can we get a private carriage, Mr. Burke?" (There are no post-chaises here, or horses on the road.) "Yes." "To take us thirty-six miles to Baltimore?" "Yes; but it will delay you an hour, perhaps two." "Never mind; I feel that if I stay half an hour in this place I shall be very ill—at any rate I shall fancy it. I am shivering now, and the thermometer is above 80; I must entreat you, as you are well, that you will humour me. No third night, if you please. Tell those people who are waiting my answer from George Town I am gone—settle my bills—wrap George up in a blanket—and get away from this place as soon as you can—I am off!" and away I went. I ran for about a quarter of a mile, till I saw the Capitol behind me.

Nothing can be more healthy than this city is now. Once more let me assure you that that scourge, the yellow fever, occurs only in the middle of summer, and that only in unusually hot seasons. I therefore do not imagine that there is any cause for apprehension, as I shall leave the country before the approach of hot weather, which never sets in till June. I have dwelt so much upon feverish subjects, that I have hardly room to give you any theatrical information; but I can truly,

though briefly, say, that I am pursuing a career of great success. The actual crowding has diminished,—that, of course, must be expected; but I have hitherto exceeded in receipts all the stars that have gone before me, and my second benefit produced 1200 dollars. Do not suppose this is falling off. It was as great as the first. Consider a second advertised night, within a fortnight of the first. I am hurrying off from Boston, in consequence of circumstances too tedious to mention. The probabilities are that I play there next week. God bless you both, my darlings! Pray keep up your spirits: and believe me, when I tell you that I am as cheerful, contented, and happy as I can be, so far removed from you both. Accept, my dearest wife, the renewed assurances of my steady and unalterable affection.

C. Mathews.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Boston, Dec. 28th, 1822.

I arrived here in health and safety on Tuesday, after a "teagos passig," when I thought I never should get to Providence. I was advised by Price to go by water, as the most pleasant and convenient, on account of my baggage, and that the average passage was about thirty or forty hours. I had a horror of two hundred and forty miles by land, with the weather so severe as it is here now, and therefore decidedly preferred it. But the wind was contrary, and we were from Thursday morning, nine o'clock, until Monday evening, before we got to Providence, where I landed, and proceeded forty miles by land, and got there time enough to be too late, for I was advertized to appear on Monday evening. Great was the disappointment thereof, for numbers came sixteen miles to see me; but I could not possibly arrive till Tuesday, though Phillips had cold beef ready for me, and waited dinner on Sunday. On my arrival I found a note from Manners, now British consul at Boston, with whom I dined on Christmas-day in a real English style. This is a day not universally observed in this country, either as to public worship, or private jollifications. As it was the 26th in the morning with you before we had left the dinner-table, we drank dear Charley's health, and many happy returns of the day.

On Tuesday night I made my appearance here in *Goldfinch* and *Tonson*—the reception great, and I was confirmed in my opinion that *Morbleu* is my best part. They huzzaed when the curtain fell. To accommodate the disappointed, who could not get in, the play and farce were encored, and repeated last night with equal effect. As I have 50*l.* per night certain, I have not inquired the receipts; but the theatre was crammed. It will not hold quite a thousand dollars, but it was full. This is the place where they were so capricious to Kean, and where he refused to act to a bad house, which was the cause of his quitting America; as he never acted after. It was for this reason I preferred a certainty. You may recollect the circumstance of places being sold by auction; the same thing occurred on Thursday. No money is taken

at the doors; and, as in Paris, tickets are issued only for the number the theatre will hold. The proprietors bind the manager down not to sell one more than the stipulated number. On great occasions (of which only four have occurred, Cooke, Phillips, Kean, and myself), people speculate in buying up tickets. It is mobbing work to purchase them. So that the elbowing and overflowing symptoms are displayed of a morning instead of an evening. People who dislike this ceremony as much as I (remember "make room for this lady to come out!") employ porters, &c.—brawny fellows—chairmen, who frequently remain there all night. When they have purchased a number of tickets at a dollar each, they will sell them to the highest bidder; and four or six dollars are sometimes given. Last night was a proof that the theatre is not large enough for great occasions, as a repeated performance refilled the house, and fellows took their station at twelve o'clock on Thursday night, and remained till the box-door opened to-day. Nothing can be more rapturous than my reception; and having made my hit here, the thing is established beyond reach of alarm or suspicion. The Bostonians have given themselves a name as critics, and it is said by themselves, that this is more like an English town than any in America,—more literary people, better polished; and larger cities look up much to their opinion. Kean, in one of his speeches from the stage, called it the literary emporium. I shall stay here nearly a month longer, and then back to New York.

I can hardly hold my pen. You have never seen ice, nor felt frost. My water-jug was frozen this morning. The ice was so thick that I could not break it with one of the legs of a chair. I am, thank God, so well that I bear it better than the natives decidedly.

C. Mathews.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Boston, Jan. 4th, 1823.

Happy new year to you and dear Charles, and may this meet you in good health and spirits as it leaves me! I ought to consider myself, as indeed I do, one of the most fortunate of men in respect to constitution. I appear to be almost the only person here that is not cut down by the severity of the climate. We know nothing of winter. The English who have been here two or three years can hardly endure it. The first season, it appears, they stood it well. I have not suffered at all. It is a curious and very novel scene, to witness the sleighs here. They are carriages, of various sizes and descriptions, placed upon iron runners without wheels, which they use as long as snow remains upon the ground. They even go long journeys in them. Some of them are in the shape of a balloon car, and go with immense velocity. As they make no noise, small bells are placed on the horses' heads to give notice of approach, so that this town is one continued scene of what some would call merriment. But as neither small nor large bells

can convey such a sentiment to me, I have no other idea but a disagreeable ringing in my ears. If the poor horses are annoyed as I am, I pity them. There is "great patronage here of me;" yes, indeed! On Wednesday night a full house, notwithstanding most terrific snow from morning till night; a white chaos. It was indeed a compliment. I shall be here nearly three weeks more.

C. MATHEWS.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Boston, Jan. 7th, 1823.

I am going on greatly; and have still the happiness of reporting to you my excellent health in this, I may call it, most terrific climate; the thermometer this morning was two degrees below zero. I have heard a black preacher, who was rather amusing. The pranks that are played in the "nigger meetings," as they are called, are beyond belief—yelling, screeching, and groaning, resembling a fox chase much more than a place of worship.

To-day nineteen dollars were paid for a box! for the first night of my "Trip to Paris," to-morrow; and so on, 14—12—10, according to the situation; and the overplus is given to a theatrical fund. So that I shall do some good here, at any rate. Notwithstanding all this, the theatre is small compared to New York, and I feel I am right in taking a certainty.

C. MATHEWS.

To Mrs. Rolls.

Boston, Massachusetts,—New England,—United States,—America:
Jan. 4th, 1823.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—Though all your efforts, and all the recollections of your former kindness, could not squeeze one line out of me in Europe, I write from the New World in full and fervent hopes of mercy, of forgiveness of past injuries, and that when I confess my sins to you, I shall not plead for pardon in vain. I suppose you have heard from my wife of the untimely fate of the only letter I have written to you for a long period. It was a good one—it was indeed! and very long too. I cannot write such another now. I was then surrounded by those I love; I can't quite say that now. I wrote that said letter to make my peace with you before I left the Old World; and by some accidental fit of absence, though I wrote it for the purpose of my son taking it with him from Liverpool to forward to you, I locked it up in my desk and took it to sea; nor did I discover the mistake until a week after I sailed. A vessel hove in sight. "A Frenchman!" said our captain. He hailed us:—

"Whither bound?"—"Havre de Grace."

"What is the name of your *sheep?*"—"William Thompson!"

"What is the capetaine's name?"—"William Thompson!"
"What is the owner's name?"—"William Thompson!"
"Have you some lady on board?"—"Yes."
"What is her name?"—"Mrs. Thompson!"
"Diable!" was roared through the trumpet, to the great amusement of our crew. He then consented to come near enough to us for the letter to be thrown on board which I had written to you. A weight was attached to it; but alas! the marksman failed. The mate undertook to throw it clean into the French vessel; but it fell short a yard or two, and my long, laborious, clever, and very entertaining letter met a watery grave!

I arrived at New York after a very pleasant passage of thirty-five days, on the 5th of September. I presume you have heard from my wife of the unfortunate circumstances under which I landed. I have seen accounts in the English papers of the yellow fever in America, and of course they have reached you in Paris. I will flatter myself, though I am not entitled to your thoughts, that you felt for my situation. Nothing could be more appalling than the intelligence as first communicated to me by two fishermen, about a hundred miles from New York. "What news?"—"Yellow fever at New York, I guess."—"Fatal?"—"I reckon it is?"—"Many deaths?"—"One hundred and forty every twenty-four hours, I suppose."—"Have the inhabitants remained?"—"Fifty thousand, or somewheres thereaways, have quit right away."—The number of deaths was an exaggeration; but we found quite enough of the intelligence true to induce me to give up all thoughts of going on shore in the city.

As we approached the harbour, the desolating effects of the pestilence were too apparent to render the fisherman's tale doubtful. The quays of the city are very commodious; and, as I have since seen them, greatly calculated to impress a stranger with notions of wealth, extended commerce, bustle, and activity. Imagine the effect of a sabbath-like silence in such a situation to those who could contrast its present quiet with its former life. Imagine (though we have no quays to allow the comparison), but suppose from the Thames, or one of the bridges, that you could look at the banks of the river, and into the streets, thence to the Strand, and that no one inhabitant was to be seen between Westminster and Blackfriars; you may then form some notion of the melancholy scene that presented itself to my eyes, with all its distressing associations. Pompeii could not be more awfully still; for one quarter of the city was, by general command, depopulated. This was called the infected district. "I fled for safety and for succour" to Baltimore, where I made my *début* about three weeks after my arrival. This was commencing operations at Doncaster, instead of making the impression in London, I spent nearly ten days before I discovered that the fever raged there also, and more fatally; but it was cautiously concealed from strangers, and passed under another name—the fatal visitor had an *alias*. I will not attempt to enter into the causes of this disgusting fact, but be assured of its truth. While the

magistracy and Board of Health of New York proclaimed the ravages of the disease, and warned strangers from approaching their shores, the Baltimorians received strangers with open arms, and proclaimed that their city was healthy! Nay, the press of the two cities entered into a kind of party controversy, and twitted each other with the pestilence, as if it were a political error, for which the government ought to be rendered accountable. Notwithstanding this calamity, I opened to a great house. The second and third were equally good; but they fell off. How is this? At length, pride and good feeling towards me (added to my reading in a Baltimore paper weekly report of deaths—"Palsy, 1; ague, 4; bilious malignant fever, 46;") brought farther truth. I was congratulated on my 1000 dollar benefit. Prodigious! under all circumstances,—coming at such a time. "How?"—"Why, sir, our epidemic."—"Oh, oh! I begin to perceive. But why don't you call it by its proper name?" Mark one answer—"Ah, the New York people can afford to lose their trade for one year. Baltimore has suffered too much; we can't afford to drive away merchants and strangers at this time of the year." I leave your imagination to fill up the rest of the canvas; you can fully understand what were my sensations when I discovered the dreadful truth.

My success at New York was triumphant; during sixteen nights great houses; from 1200 to 1800 dollars nightly; a most joyous audience; and the attentions paid me in private have been equally flattering. The upper orders of society are very pleasing, and infinitely more polished than it is the fashion to believe in Europe. They have less fun than the grave English; not a very quick perception of humour, and are apparently dead to the fascinations of punning. Their gravity almost amounts to melancholy; and therefore it is hopeless to expect sport in fishing for character. I have thrown many lines into their calm unruffled streams, and have not been negligent in attending to the nicety of my baits, but I have not caught anything. I should have been delighted at a bite, but I have not even been solaced by a nibble. However, I have not thrown away my hooks in despair; my rods are not yet laid by for the season.

As to the lower orders, I know not where they are to be found. I know no bait that will tempt them from their lurking-places. The servants, waiters, porters, &c., are nearly all "niggars;" the hackney-coachmen nearly all Irish or Scotch. There are apparently no poor—certainly no beggars. The American is too proud and independent to accept a menial situation. He will not be called servant, nor allow that he has a master. As to liberty and independence, "rare words," I am convinced that it is only productive of one very apparent effect, which is, to render the rich and educated slaves to their inferiors; at least, to their absurd notions. I dare say you have, amongst others of my friends, wondered why I should go to America. It was an irresistible impulse. If I am to believe a clergyman of the Dutch Reformed Church, who has been preaching at me because I perform to fuller houses than he does, I could not possibly avoid it, as I was sent

here for a special purpose. This gentleman undertakes to point out the causes of the late calamity, and pretends to have discovered the sins that have excited the vengeance of the Great Creator. I have been here about a fortnight, and shall remain three weeks longer; then to New York, and thence to Philadelphia. If you should be inclined to treat a poor fellow with a letter, which will be doubly dear to him from its journeying three thousand miles, why so—it will be well received. How difficult it is to fancy the situation of those who are dear to us, at such a distance! Well, well! I must hope and hope, and look forward to that delicious moment when I may pop upon you all once more. I see you all now, I do. Oh, how I should like to open a door slily this afternoon, and say, "Ah!" to those dear little roarers that were wont to be such an audience at Briton Ferry! God bless them all! and you, my dear Mr. and Mrs. Rolls, and Mrs. Barnet, and Miss Sherrat. Remember me kindly to everybody; and be assured, that though I have been silent, you have always been present to my sweetest recollections, and that I am, and always shall be, most gratefully and sincerely yours,

C. Mathews.

Thermometer two degrees below zero.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Boston, Jan. 12th, 1823, alias Frozen Regions.

If you can hold a pen, dare to go from one room to another, or to open your mouth without the fear of your words being frozen up—if you can exert any of your energies, then pity me as I envy you in such a case. This is the most trying climate that I ever imagined. In short, all you have read of Russia will apply to it. The water jug, from which I had taken water to wash my hands at four o'clock, was frozen at seven so hard that I could not break it. I bear it as well as can be expected—that is to say, I have not had the slightest symptom of cold. I have gone through my work with health and strength; but I cannot go out, for I am afraid to walk, and have no desire to try their sleighing—for sleighing and killing are synonymous terms with me. I have once or twice experienced the sensation in their hacks here, which are taken off their wheels and placed upon runners, as they call them, for not one pair of wheels is to be seen in the town. Indeed, they could not possibly get through the accumulation of snow. These people are all happy, and as merry as Americans can affect to be—that vexes me, who can only make myself happy by anticipating a thaw, and death to their mad frolics in their sleighs. They whisk along at about the rate of twelve miles an hour, and in open carriages like the half of a boat. So fond are they of the sport, that it is common for parties to go out at night ten or fifteen miles to adjacent villages, dance there, and then return in these open sleighs. Funny people! they declare it is right *arnest* fun. I believe it is all they enjoy; so rest them merry!

The society here (the upper ranks—I have literally had no intercourse with any other) is quite delightful. Washington Irving's letters here afforded two or three delightful days. At two houses in particular, I will boldly say, that in no part of the world where I have travelled have I seen "the thing done in better style," as they say in England, as to dinners, servants, furniture, literary conversation, &c. It is impossible, however prejudiced a man may be, to leave one of the houses of the first people here, or at New York, and make such remarks as —— did. A man might with equal justice speak of Irish manners generally from the specimens of it among Dublin shopkeepers. Talking of Irish manners puts me in mind of English Manners. He is consul here, and as I met him wherever I went in old times, of course we had plenty to say to each other. He has a very pleasant family, and is a great solace to me during this miserable weather.

The "Trip to Paris" made an immense hit here, and places for the second night of it, to-morrow, were sold by auction yesterday at from 12 to 17 dollars for the first choice. This is the place where Kean lost himself. He had first complimented them in a speech, and called the city the literary emporium of the New Word, and afterwards got drunk, and would not play to a thin house. I have beat Kean here in receipts.

C. Mathews.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Boston, Jan. 29th, 1823.

Here I am still at Boston. This is my last night. I wish you could see me play *Monsieur Tonson;* it is certainly the very best thing I ever did. It is such a favourite here that I am pressed to take it for my benefit. In this place so many persons will not go to a theatre, who still wish to see me, that I am invited to give a night in a concert hall, which I am told will be greatly attended. No clergyman dare to go to a theatre here, but they will patronize me in a room; and so, in compliance with this request, on Friday night I operate. You make me envy you, when you describe the beautiful weather you have. The severity of the frost here is beyond anything a European can fancy.

When our Thames is frozen over, the event is commemorated by fairs, and bills printed on the surface of the ice; here, the rivers, five or six times as broad as the Thames, are always frozen in the winter, and navigation is entirely suspended. I have borne the climate wonderfully, and am the amazement of the natives, who are all enveloped in warm wrappings of every description. I am more confirmed than ever in my objection to that system.

By the packet of the 8th of February I shall send money to Stephenson. My first note to Arnold is due in March, it is for 1200*l.* I shall send from that sum to 2000*l.*, according to the state of the money market when I get to New York; this I promised him should be arranged with you. It is a melancholy reflection that I shall

probably not hear a remark from you on this subject until nearly May, but I must endure it. I am in the best of health, thank God!

Charles Lamb's account of my gallery has been copied into an English newspaper here, called the *Albion*, and so has the scrap you sent me, calling me such funny names—"Co" "Kaleidoscope," &c.

My time here has been spent in such uniformity, that you must excuse the dulness of my epistles. Rehearsals with pumps—all morning—three nights playing—dining out, &c. My own "At Home" has hit much harder here than at New York, and is preferred to the acting; there it was *vice versâ*. The localities are the chief drawbacks, as you may suppose. My own "Youthful Days" is the chief favourite; and the Volunteer Song produces effect, for it is said to be the exact representation of a similar scene here—where there are no regulars. I can gather from that how joyous they would be if the scenes were all equally familiar to them. Remember me to everybody.

C. MATHEWS.

The scrap alluded to in the foregoing letter, calling him "such funny names," &c., was taken from a work called "Theatrical Portraits," &c., by Harry Sloe Van Dyk. The lines are eccentric, and very expressive as—

"A PORTRAIT OF MATHEWS.

"What shall we call thee, thou amusing elf,
Who hast a host of beings in thyself?
Who canst variety in all infuse,
And changest like the expiring dolphin's hues,
Or skies in April? Say, what term would be
Appropriate, thou world's epitome?
Thou ambulating rainbow! Fitful hope!
Thou earthly moon! Thou live kaleidoscope!
Thou twenty voices! Antidote to woe!
Thou one plurality! Thou single Co.!"*

* During this year was also published, in Oxford, what I have been told is an ingenious parody on some of the Sapphics of Horace, headed—

"MATHEWS COMICI LAUDES.

"Prime mimorum! thou rare mimic Mathews!
Quem jocus circum volat, blithe as Mayday,
Te canant gownsmen, giddy and grave too,
All over Oxford.

Tu potes proctors comitesque bull dogs
Ducere, et redcoats celeres morari;
E'en the stern masters tibi blandienti
Smilingly cedunt.

Quin et each high don sociique vultu
Titter invito 'mid the gay assemblage;
Shouts of applause rise rapid, dum catervas
Carmine mulces.

Tu, merry fellow, velut es levamen
To the pale forms whose final doom approaches;
Who, cito coram solio Minervæ
Shuddering will stand.

Fell are her Priests! Quum Vitulos prehendant
Singulos eheu! lacerant in pieces!
Hi tamen mites sweetly gaze at Mathews
Full of his frolics.

Serus in Lunnum redeas, diuque
Gratus intersis populo togato!
Leave the dull Cockneys, with us to be 'At Home,' sir!
Go it in Oxford!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

Interview at Boston between Mr. Mathews and an old friend of his father—Letter from that gentleman to Mr. Mathews—Letters to Mrs. Mathews—Letter from Mr. Mathews to Mr. James Smith; the American character; inordinate love of petty titles; Yankee conversation; independent landlords; conversation with an American Boniface; a black Methodist; Negro songs—Letters to Mrs. Mathews—Preparations for return to England.

While my husband was at Boston, an old friend of his father introduced himself to him. He was a dissenting minister, and one of those who enforced their opinions by the mildness and liberality of their language and manner. Such a one, with all my husband's early distaste of the unwashed part of the community, he received with more than common respect and attention; and a very long and interesting interview took place. A few days after, Mr. Mathews being on the eve of his departure for New York, the following interesting and amiable letter was delivered to him from Mr. Sabine, the clergyman alluded to, and much I regret that I do not possess a copy of the answer to it:—

To C. Mathews, Esq.

Boston, N. E., Elliot-street, Feb. 1st, 1823.

My dear Sir,—The half-hour's conversation with which you favoured me the other day, has brought so many "things of other days" to my mind, that I cannot persuade myself to dismiss you and them without tendering again my best wishes for your happiness and prosperity. I have taken the liberty also to send you a sermon, preached by me on the last State thanksgiving-day. I have so done for two reasons: first, you will receive it on Sunday—perhaps you will be grave enough to give a sermon a reading on such a day, especially as it is one sent you by a countryman; and then, there is something in it directly on the subject to which we alluded when we conversed on the New England character. In this particular, New England people and English Dissenters are much alike.

The theatre has never received, and perhaps will never receive much support from them. The views and feelings of your good old father (now in a happier world,) are too well known to you to render it

necessary for me to add another word on that head. The patronage, however, which you have enjoyed in this grave city, must prove to you that there are many so far weaned from the prejudices and habits of the old folks, as to relish the wit and mirth of the English stage. Yet, still I am under a persuasion, that a more moral and sober age is too fast advancing upon us to admit of theatrical success in this region. I should not wonder if Boston Theatre, before the lapse of seven years, were in the hands of the religious community, and converted into a church. Would it fill you with any regret should you hear, a few years hence, when mellowing into age, that your countryman was calling them to repentance and to tears on that very spot on which you in younger days made so many laugh, and forget almost that they were immortal? And how delighted should I be to hear that you had withdrawn so much wit and talent from the focus of public amusement—for your quota I am sure you have amply rendered—and directed them, even at your term of life, to a more moral purpose. I am not, my dear sir, dealing out censure, I am rather as a Christian asking the residue of your powers to be engaged in a service which will repay you, and the world, too, a thousandfold beyond all that has been rendered hitherto in the former course. A man of your turn cannot fall back upon himself, and feast on private life; you must, to old age, be a public man. I would that that taste for public benefit should at length be consecrated to religion and the immortal interests of men. Will you not be persuaded again to visit the Holy Land, and review the records of apostolic acts, to allow yourself to be charmed with the astonishing effects produced by the powers of a single disciple of our Saviour, who at one exhibition of his talents (endued with power from on high, it is true) captivated three thousand, and made them his stated attendants, which Mr. Mathews has never yet done, but much like which he may do, if he can address by the same rule and speak the same thing.

When I began this scrawl I had not measured out this drift, but, as it has gone, so you will take it, as coming out of the right place—a good and honest heart. What I intended to have said was this:—If you should be disposed to hear a sermon, and should be able to reach Boylston Hall in the afternoon, you may hear a preacher somewhat after the fashion of your good old-fashioned father, whose memory I revere, and whom I should gladly serve in the person of his son. May a gracious Providence preserve you from all evil, and in due time restore you to your country and to your family, and add to you every other blessing for both worlds! prays, my dear sir,

Yours respectfully and affectionately, JAMES SABINE.

To Mrs. Mathews.

New York, Feb. 7th, 1823.

Here I am once more in New York, at my old quarters, comfortably lodged. I left Boston on Sunday, and arrived here yesterday, two

hundred and forty miles. Thermometer eight degrees below zero! Most fortunately, a gentleman (really a gentleman) and his wife,* a colonel, and naval officer, had hired a coach to themselves. I was invited to join the party. Chartering a stage-coach here is the only imitation the Americans have of posting. It means merely, that you keep out all passengers by paying for the whole coach, and stop when and where you like. No language can convey to you the horrors of travelling in this country. Though their winters are like Siberia, because their summers are like the East Indies, they only provide themselves against heat. I don't believe there is a carriage in the country covered all over so as to keep out the air. All descriptions of carriages are open in summer, and they have only temporary covering for winter. No panels like ours. It is impossible, therefore, to be warm. The houses, generally speaking, are of the same description. I slept in a bed on the road without even posts for curtains—a regular hospital-bed; but not so good as those in St. George's Hospital. There was no fireplace in the room. When I arose in the morning, I was obliged to call one of our party to button my waistcoat, my fingers were completely frost-bitten. With all this the atmosphere is delightfully cheering; an Italian sky, and days without even a cloud. You know how valuable this is to me, and when I can be in action I bear the climate well. The wretched English who have been lured here, and have not the means of getting back, are pictures of misery and despair. The second and third year is sure to make inroads on their constitution. They all bear the first summer and winter well. I am much delighted to find Elliston has been so attentive to you.

I enclose you a bill for 2000*l.* sterling, which I wish to be sent to Rowland Stephenson the moment you receive it. I wrote you by the 1st February packet to apprise you of the note to Arnold for 1200*l.* being due in March.† It is to be taken out of the sum inclosed. I send this directed to Mr. Freeling; and, by the time I get your acknowledgment of it, I shall be thinking of moving towards Europe. God bless you and my dear boy.

C. MATHEWS.

The following letter to his friend, Mr. James Smith, gives a lively view of what my husband had observed in his American tour:—

To James Smith, Esq.

Philadelphia, Feb. 23rd, 1823.

MY DEAR SMITH,—I imagine by this time you begin to be a little impatient, and perhaps anxious to hear from me, though I must suppose you have made every allowance for my apparent neglect. You have doubtless heard of the calamitous circumstances under which I landed

* Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Eliot of Boston.

† It will be remembered that Mr. Mathews had engaged to pay Mr. Arnold 2000*l.*, besides an additional season, for his permission to visit America.

in this country, and you will readily believe that it was a most unpropitious time to extract anything like fun or humour from the natives, even had they possessed as much as the Irish. America was, at the time of my arrival, a huge hospital, and conversation a mere medical report. My "commercial speculations" have been completely deranged, and though not destroyed, very materially injured. It was not till the frost set in, that I could discover even a smile on any of the naturally saturnine grave visages of the natives. You may suppose that I was not much disposed to mirth myself, or to draw it from others, during such a visitation. This has naturally tended to delay me in those observations which I should otherwise have immediately commenced, on the habits and peculiarities of the Americans. At the same time it is my belief, that had I arrived after a successful war, and during rejoicings for peace, instead of days of mourning and sickness, I should not have discovered much more of merriment of character, humour, or any one ingredient of which I was in search, and which is now, in fact, the chief motive of my longer stay in the country.

It will require all your ingenuity, all your fancy (and more than ever I possessed), to find real materials in this country for a humorous entertainment. There is such a universal sameness of manner and character, so uniform a style of walking and looking, of dressing and thinking, that I really think I knew as much of them in October as I know of them now in February. The real unadulterated natives are only one remove from the Quakers: they never joke themselves, and they cannot see it in others. They would stare at you as a white wonder; and be perfectly amazed how any man under a hundred years of age, could possibly have collected so many good jokes, for they would be utterly incredulous that a man could utter his own wit. As they have never seen such people, they are not obliged to believe that they exist. If I excelled in narrative, and were a lecturer, allowed to be occasionally grave, I could find infinite variety of materials to dwell upon, and rather amusing too; but as I feel perfect conviction that I am never amusing without I assume the manner of another, I know not how to suggest matter for comic effects, out of mere observations. I should be very much inclined to remove many prejudices that exist between the two countries, and most anxious to do justice to the upper orders of people. They are well informed, polite, hospitable, unaffected. I can truly say, that I have never experienced more attentions in my own country. I do not believe, at least, I cannot discover, that they differ at all from the polished people of the same rank in England. They do not certainly approach to the ease and finish of our upper ranks. I should feel equally disposed to scourge, to flagellate, to score to the backbone, all the middling and lower orders. They are as infinitely beneath the notions that Europeans entertain of them, as their superiors are above them. Not merely sullen and cold, but studiously rude. This I have no hesitation in saying. The stage-driver says, "Yes, *sir*," and "no, *sir*," to the ostler, but to a question from a person who has a clean neckcloth, he instantly draws up, and, in the

most repulsive manner, answers, "No," "ay," or "very well." The upper orders are literally slaves to the lower. The poorest people in the country will submit to exist in the most miserable manner, with their families, rather than any one of them should be degraded by servitude. The consequence is, that all the menial situations are filled by negroes (niggers), and Irish and Scotch. This constitutes the great difficulty in picking up anecdote, character, or anything that would be called peculiarity, in Ireland or Scotland; even in dialect, the same disappointment follows the attempt. All that is attributed by foreigners to the English appears to belong to the Americans, but with exaggerations—reserve, coldness, monotony, &c. The gravity of the upper orders, which is by no means displeasing, becomes perfect unkindness (to make use of no stronger expression) in the middling orders; for though I have used the term lower, I hardly know who they are, where they are, or how they exist. They appear to me to be too proud even to be seen. Not one American have I yet seen waiting at table, or in any situation where he might run the risk of being called servant. This is commonplace to you, I am aware, but I mean to assure you that the tourists have not exaggerated it: they are all within the mark.

You will from this perceive what difficulty I have to discover character or peculiarities. If I enter into conversation with a coachman, he is Irish; if a fellow brings me a note, he is Scotch. If I call a porter, he is a negro. I can't come at the American without I go to the porter-houses, and that I cannot condescend to do. There are no phrases, no intonations, and no instances of bad pronunciation, false grammar, or incorrect English, that I cannot trace to be of English origin. Yorkshire, Somersetshire, and above all, London, have supplied them most copiously. Here arises another difficulty. The impression would be, that there is no novelty in this—this has been done before—these are English characters. A week in Ireland would supply more drollery than twelve months here. Then again, all persons are dressed alike, nobody well-dressed, no one shabby. The judge, the barrister, the shopkeeper, the President, the member of Congress, the mechanic, the servant, without the slightest variation. Even in the courts of justice there is no distinction of ranks. The judge in the shabby blue coat and striped waistcoat, that the tipstaff wears. Now, I feel perfectly satisfied that my audience would yawn at this description of the people, even if it could boast of the recommendation of novelty. The Yankee is a term given by all the inhabitants of the other parts of the United States to those of the east exclusively. The larger cities boast of superiority in every respect, and speak of the Rhode Islander, and the Massachusetts-man, exactly as the English speak of all Americans, and have a contempt for a Yankee.

I have just come from Boston in the latter State, and certainly I have discovered more of character there than in the cities of New York, Baltimore, or Philadelphia, where the language, generally, is better spoken than in London, or any part of England. I quite agree with you in your remarks, that a journal is necessary on a tour, but I doubt

its use in America.* "The court of justice" is dulness itself. The Quakers' meeting would be a better subject, if the Quakers talked as much as the counsellors; and this again would be Westminster Hall on an uninteresting day, without wigs. The "travellers" I have acted upon. But there is no "travellers' room" at an inn. All travellers of every description are shown into the same room, and silence reigns amidst the smoke of cigars. The only notions I have had (droll to say) is a coach scene "*à la diligence.*" Some of the summer dresses would be new to the English. Negro women dressed like Quakers—very common here. A very fat negro, with whom I met, driving a stage-coach (which are almost as peculiar as the French), and urging his horses by different tunes on a fiddle, while he ingeniously fastened the reins round his neck. This would give an opportunity for the only costume which differs from that of our own country, the summer dress. With respect to songs, I really fear that I shall hardly be able to suggest subjects. The only striking subject for a patter song† is the inordinate love of title; a remarkable instance of the weakness and inconsistency of these simple republicans. Though the honour of knighthood bestowed on their President, even if he were a Washington, would rouse the country into a civil war, they are more ridiculously ostentatious of the petty titles that are recognised than any people under the sun. There is not any regular military establishment; a militia is kept up by occasional drillings, &c.; and, in case of war, this is their only effective force. The officers, therefore, are composed of all ranks of persons; and whether they have actually served or not, whether retired or in present exercise, they tenaciously exact their titles. On every road, even at the meanest pothouse, it is common to call out, "Major, bring me a glass of toddy!" "Captain Obis, three segars, and change for a dollar!" "Why are we so long changing horses, colonel?" This was addressed to our coachman—a fact! "Why, Achilles is gone to get one of the horses shod, but the Major is a good hand, he'll soon clap four shoes on."—"Othello, run to Captain Smith's for a pound of cheese."

I heard at New York—"Colonel Hunter, your bread is by no means so good as that you baked at the beginning of the year." "Sheriff, your health." "Judge, a glass of wine." "Counsellor, allow me to send you some beef." They are chiefly remarkable for accenting the wrong syllable, in (eng*i*ne, genu*i*ne,‡ *e*nquiry. Located is in g neral use; *approbated*, *ultimated*, &c.) "Admire," is to have an inclination to do anything, as, "I should *admire* to skate to-day."§ "Ugly" means *ill-tempered*. "It is a pity such a pretty woman should be so

* His own extraordinary memory rendered a journal unnecessary; his memoranda were to be found only on the "written tablets of the brain."

† A patter-song means one of those for which he was so celebrated, with speaking between every verse.

‡ All the expressions with the ( ) are used at the bar and in the pulpit.

§ Admire is used in the same sense in our county of Suffolk.

ugly." If they speak of a "plain woman" they say she is *awful*. "Clever" is *good-natured*—as, "He's a *clever* fellow, but a damned fool." "Considerable," in the general sense, but as an adverb—as, "He is *considerable* rich." "Guess" is always used in cases where no doubt exists:—"I *guess* I have a headache." "Servants" are called *helps*. "Slick" is *nice*. "A *slick* potato." "He did it *slickee*" (cleverly); and "*slick* right away." "My wife died *slick* right away" —that is, she went off pleasantly, but suddenly. "That is a little too damned bad;" "a little grain of water." "*Pro*gress," used as a verb —as, "I guess our western States *pro*gress very fast;" *i.e.*, improve. "Adm*ir*able is generally said. The particle *to* is very generally used (not by learned persons) after a verb—as, "I guess it's a fine day. Will you take a walk?" "I should admire *to*," or, "I have no occasion *to*." "When you were *to* Boston?" "Have you been out in the rain?"—"Yes, but I had not ought *to*."

The following dialogue was furnished me by an ear-witness, who knew my desire to collect:—"Anything new to-day, Mr. B.?"—"I guess I have not heard anything."—How's your lady?"—"Nicely. She *pro*gresses fast under Dr. A. She comes on slick, and grows quite fleshy."—"How's Miss Sabrina?"—"She's quite *good* (well). She's a *foine girl*."—"I think she is, though she's rather awful."—"I never saw her ugly in my life, and if she had but a pretty face, she'd be *com*plete! Real!"—"Have you taken her to the theayter yet?"—"I hadn't ought *to*."—"Why?"—"I guess I can't afford it."—"Is not Mathews a favo*rite* of yours?"—"Not by no manner of means. I wish he'd take himself off."—"I reckon he'll take us off when he's at home in his own country again."—"He won't dare to. We would not suffer that there."—"He's a smart fellow" (applied to any talent); "but I like a steady actor, as gives us time to admire him, and find out his beauties."

They use the word *raised* for *born*, or erecting a building:—"Where were you *raised?*"—"In Virginia." "I guess you have considerable hogs and niggers?"—"Yes, we have plenty of them black cattle." "Will you come and take a little grain of brandy, or whisky?"—"I should admire to, for I'm considerable thirsty; but I must first go and speak to the *gentleman* as looks after my nags." "Where does your horse keep?"—"At Colonel Crupper's livery-stables." "I guess the colonel has pretty damned bad help?"—"The ostler as tends the stable is a spry likely lad?" "Yes, he's spry and well-looking, but pretty ugly."—"I don't mind his ugliness. If he showed me any of it, I'd make him clear out pretty damned quick." "You'll find me at Sampson's grog-shop, I guess. You won't be long?"—"I'm coming right back. Tell Sampson to put a little grain of bitters in my brandy."

The strongest *character* is the *landlord* of an inn. He is the most independent person in America. You *must* be impressed with the idea that he confers a favour upon *you*, or it is in vain to expect any accommodation. He can't be caricatured; I won't spare him an inch. He is, too, the most insolent rascal I ever encountered; he is

the double-distilled of those qualities I described as appertaining to the middling orders. Here I can *personate* to advantage. It will be my main-stay, my sheet-anchor. I have already three or four distinct specimens of the same species. The effect will depend more on manner than matter. *Par exemple.* If you arrive at the inn, the regular system of inattention and freezing indifference is instantly apparent. No one appears. You enter the house, and search about for a landlord or waiter. Probably you pass the former, but fearing he may be the Judge or the Governor of the State, you are afraid to address him. You find a *nigger*—no mistaking *him.* "Where's your master?" (A black look). "*Dat* Missa Rivers."

The following little dialogue took place with me. I respectfully solicited a room for myself and friend (an Englishman, who, like myself, was aware of the manners and customs, and *hoped* to be annoyed, for the sake of others "At Home.") "Can we have a private room?" "*I guess you can, if there isn't nobody in it.*"—*Mathews.* "Can we have some dinner?" *Landlord.* "Dinner! why, we've dined these two hours! It's four o'clock!" (All ranks dine at a *table-d'hôte*). *Mathews.* "Still, we have had no dinner; perhaps, sir, you would oblige us?" *Landlord.* "I suspect, rather, we've something left as we had for our dinner. But you should have come sooner if you wanted to dine; this is no time for dinner, after everybody's done. It puts one's *helps* out of the way."—*Mathews.* "Well, sir, the help will be paid for his trouble; therefore try your best for us." A Hottentot Adonis appeared, with his sleeves tucked up to his shoulders (thermometer 90°), an effluvia arising from his ebony skin, that he ingeniously overpowered by one of greater power from a leg of lamb.—*Mathews.* "Any port wine?" "Yes, massa, berry good a wine."—*Mathews.* "Bring a bottle." A bottle of mulled *Day and Martin* was brought.—"Any ice?" "Not to-day, massa; none in Elizabeth Town; a can't get a any *Sudday*" (Sunday). At this moment enters mine host, who takes a chair, and sits down with his hat on and a segar in his mouth, and inquires who we are—where we are going, &c. "*Colonel Gympentike* and *Major Foozle*, going to Bristol."—*Mathews.* "Your wine is very hot." *Landlord.* "Why, I don't know for that; it *keeps* in the bar."—*Mathews.* "Have you no cellar?" *Landlord.* "I suppose I have, but not for *that.* It's always in the bar right an end."—*Mathews.* "It's rather thick; have you had it long?" *Landlord.* "Three weeks and a bit. I fetched it in my chay myself from Philadelphee, a little while back."

At four in the morning a messenger arrived in the mail, who inquired for me, having a letter for me from a friend, advising me to fly, as the fever, he knew, was in Elizabeth Town. Mine host *guessed* I was the man, and entered my room with a candle. *Landlord.* "A letter for you, I reckon."—*Mathews.* "Did the messenger tell you to give it me in the middle of the night?—*Landlord.* "I guess he did not. It was my own contrivance."—*Mathews.* "It is an odd hour to wake a man."—*Landlord.* I guess I did the right thing, and that there is

always propriety. Whatever you perform, fulfil *that* right away." I was so tickled that I said: "You're a pleasant man; how's your wife?" *Landlord.* "Why, she's tolerable well, but *pretty poor*" (very thin). —*Mathews.* "Well, I shall not get up until eight or nine, therefore adieu! thou lovely youth. I must still think it was very extraordinary to disturb me." *Landlord.* "Ah, I don't mind remarks when I fulfils propriety. I'm an honest man, and I presumes I have done the right thing, and then remarks is equal. I am a *docile* man in church and state."—*Exit with candle.*

Another instance, lately in my journey from Boston to New York; nearly the same dialogue, but a different-looking being, a dear little punchy fellow, with a hat as large as a tea-board, and *such* a tail! He was just going to bed, and when we asked for supper, he said, "Why, we have supped these three hours; what made you come to-night?" But this interview requires personation, and is one of the few instances of originality.

I shall be rich in black fun. I have studied their broken English carefully. It is pronounced the real thing, even by the Yankees. It is a pity that I dare not touch upon a preacher. I know its danger, but perhaps the absurdity might give a *colour* to it—a *black* Methodist! I have a specimen from life, which is relished highly in private. A *leetle* bit you shall have. By the by, they call the *nigger* meetings "*Black Brimstone Churches.*" "My wordy bredren, it a no use to come to de meetum-house to ear de most hellygunt orashions if a no put a de *cent* into de plate; de spiritable man cannot get a on widout de temporalities; twelve 'postles must hab de candle to burn. You dress a self up in de fine blue a cot, and a bandalore breechum, and tink a look like a gemman, but no more like a gemman dan put a finger in de fire, and take him out again, widout you put a de money in a de plate. He lend a to de poor, lend to de Law (Lord), if you like a de secoority drop a de cents in to de box. My sister in a de gallery too dress em up wid de poke a de bonnet, and de furbellow-tippet, and look in de glass and say, 'Pretty Miss Phyllis, how bell I look!' but no pretty in de eye of the Law (Lord) widout a drop a cent in de plate. My friend and bredren, in my endeavour to save you, I come across de bay in de stim a boat. I never was more shock dan when I see de race a horse a rubbin down. No fear o' de Law afore dere eye on de Sabbat a day, ben I was tinking of de great enjawment my friend at a Baltimore was to have dis night, dey rub a down de horse for de use of de debbil. Twix you and I, no see what de white folk make so much fun of us, for when dey act so foolish demselve, dey tink dey know ebery ting, and dat we poor brack people know noting at all amose (almost). Den shew dem how much more dollars you can put in de plate dan de white meetum-houses. But, am sorry to say, some of you put three cent in a plate, and take a out a quarter a dollar. What de say ven you go to hebben? Dey ask you what you do wid de twenty-two cent you take out of de plate when you put in de tree cent? what you go do den?"

I have several specimens of these black gentry that I can bring into

play, and particularly scraps of songs, and malaprops, such as Mahometan below Cæsar (Thermometer below zero), &c.

SONG.

Oh! love is like de pepper-corn,
  It makes me act so cute;
It make de bosoms feel so warm,
  And eye shine like new boot!
I meet Miss Phillis tudder day
  In berry pensive mood—
She almost cry her eyes away
  For Pomp's ingratitude.

Oh, lubby brushing maid, said I,
  What makee look so sad?
Ah, Scip! de brooteous virgin cry,
  I feel most debblish bad!
For Pomp he stole my heart away,
  Me taught him berry good;
But he no lub me now he say!
  Chah! what ingratitude!

I can no more; but you shall hear again shortly from,

Yours most truly, C. Mathews.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Philadelphia, Feb. 25th, 1823.

I have an opportunity of sending rather a larger packet than I should despatch by post, by a gentleman of Philadelphia, whom I hereby introduce to your notice as well worthy of your civilities. I have received attentions from him in the way of little acts of kindness, for which I am very grateful.

He set me on my journey to New York, as they say in Old York, and rode twenty miles with me to keep up my spirits when I first went there. It will, doubtless, be a satisfaction to you to hear an account from any eye-witness of my brilliant reception here last night, in the midst of a snow-storm that would have driven English people away from the theatre, like a flock of wild geese.

Price has come on with me, like a good fellow, to take care of me; and I am at a peculiar sort of a house, for America, where I am really comfortable—a rarer word here than in France.

Mr. Waln will describe to you the nature of the establishment. It is nearer the English mark than any house in the country; and there is plenty of water, thank Heaven! The regular allowance of an American inn is about a pint daily, with one towel nine inches square, and one remove only from India paper.

I have written a long letter, as you will see, to Smith. Notwith-

standing the nature of the letter I have written to him, I do not despair of a good entertainment being formed from my trip.

The auction at Boston will show the extraordinary prices given for boxes. It was made a wonder of in Kean. Observe that the biddings were for choice of boxes. If a man wished to get No. 4 as the best box for hearing, he bids 12 dollars, and the box holds 9—a dollar for each seat, so that his box costs 21 dollars.

C. MATHEWS.

To Mrs. Mathews.

New York, May 15th, 1823.

It is my intention to embark hence on Sunday the 24th, in the packet-ship *Meteor*, Captain Cobb, and hope to be at home, please God! before my birthday, the 28th of June. Since I wrote to you last I have received your journal up to the 5th of April, exposing to me for the first time the wretched state of health to which you have been doomed in my absence. Indeed, indeed, I sympathise most sincerely with you, and grieve most truly that I have been, though the innocent, yet the real cause of your sufferings by my unfortunate expedition. Oh! my prophetic soul! I may say; for I always declared that the most severe pang at the calamity here was the perfect conviction of the shock it would be to your nerves. I trust that your well-meant and kind deception is not carried on now; and that I may flatter myself with the hope that I shall find you, as you say, quite restored to health. God grant it may be so!

I am quite resolved now on my course. No advantage under heaven should induce me to inflict so cruel a penalty upon you as a journey to Liverpool. You must be convinced of my entire ignorance of your state of health, when I even hinted at it. No; the moment I arrive at Liverpool I will write to you and inform you of the time of my probable arrival at home. I have written to Lewis again, by the *Columbia*, and informed him of my new determination. So now, my dearest wife, I have nothing to add, but that as my prayers have been unceasing for your health and happiness, they will be redoubled for our happy, happy meeting, and the entire restoration of your health. I am astonished how you could get through such laborious letters, and the ingenuity of your innocent deceit throughout. What a deceitful pair we have been! At the very time you were laying your plans, I was plotting here; but I have never been deceived in my feelings and my forebodings. I possess the gift of second sight, if anybody ever did. If I wanted anything to endear Charles to me more strongly than ever, it is his conduct towards you. God will bless him for it.

C. MATHEWS.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Mr. Mathews at New York in the character of *Othello*—Success of the attempt —Anticipation by the Americans that Mr. Mathews would, on his return to England, ridicule their peculiarities—Public dinner given to him—Letter from Mr. Theodore Hook to Mr. Mathews—Mr. Mathews's engagement to perform in the regular drama: his journey to Dublin—Letter to Mrs. Mathews: a stage-coach nuisance—Mr. Mathews's dislike of idle visitors—Letters to Mrs. Mathews: arrival at Seapoint; success at Dublin.

About the middle of May, Mr. Mathews was induced to appear at New York in the character of *Othello*, which he had studied for the occasion. What led him to perform such a part I totally forget, although I have some indistinct recollection that it was in consequence of a wager made by Mr. Price. Strange to say, the attempt was received with great applause, and being very attractive, was several times repeated. I have found the first and second bill of this performance. On both those nights the tragedy was followed by the farce of "The Prize," in which he played *Lenitive*.

The following remarks, which appeared in America, on the performance, ought to find a place here:—

The performance of last evening we consider one of the most extraordinary we ever witnessed. It will hardly be credited that Mr. Mathews most completely succeeded in the arduous character of *Othello!* We could not conceive that an actor, whose forte has been considered till now all comic, could so far divest himself of his humorous peculiarities, as to convey to his audience a very chaste, correct, pleasing, and even affecting picture of the unhappy Moor. In Mr. Mathews' delivery of the text there was everything to applaud; in his action, nothing to condemn. To the business of the scene he was throughout most attentive, and in the third, fourth, and last acts, he afforded the most complete triumph of skill we have ever witnessed. The celebrated address to the duke and senators was judiciously given, with an air of modest firmness extremely pleasing; and to all the splendid passages which stud this beautiful tragedy, Mr. Mathews gave additional effect, by the simple eloquence of his delivery, and the correctness of his readings.

The following sensible remarks, which seem to anticipate that Mr. Mathews was likely to take away with him, for home-consumption, some characteristics of the Americans, appeared in America, just on the eve of his departure.

On Monday evening this extraordinary actor takes leave of the American audience, to return to the comforts of his home and family, and to those friends and associates which many years of professional services and an unquestionable character and deportment have acquired for him. He returns with profit, if not with improvement; and though it may be expected that some of our national peculiarities will form the subject of future entertainments, we are persuaded that he has discerned some traits worthy his esteem and respect. We should not complain if these peculiarities are presented in a rational and amusing way to an English audience; for Mathews has been entertaining us with many amusing hits and laughable absurdities at the expense of his own countrymen. We have, therefore, no right to expect an exemption from these professional sallies and satires.

As a tribute of respect, a public farewell dinner was given to him. The following notice of it appeared:—

To-day, a party of Mr. Mathews's friends give him a dinner at Sykes's Coffee-house. We have no doubt it will be a splendid one, as Mr. Sykes has been several days preparing for it. Tickets for this dinner *only* 10 dollars each!—a mere trifle!

By the active friendship of Mr. Freeling, I received the earliest information of my husband's approach to England, and I set off, accompanied by Charles, to Liverpool, where we arrived some days earlier than Mr. Mathews, who landed about the 23rd of June, in high health and spirits.

To C. Mathews, Esq.

Putney, Sunday evening.

Dear Mat.,—Ever since I saw a note of yours to Powell, in which you call me Theodorus, I have been longing to get over to you; but, well aware of the *perpetual* engagements of men in your extremely idle profession, I have thought of rehearsals and "recollections;" and being some nine or ten miles from you, it would be rash to risk the journey on so slender a chance of catching you at home.

I take this opportunity—it may seem somewhat late—of congratulating you upon your return to England, after a series, if one may judge by the newspapers, of worries and dangers. I confess I long to talk over your marine adventures; and, as I suppose there would be no chance of getting you here, if you will tell me any morning when you will be *chez vous*, except Tuesday or Thursday, I will drive over and breakfast with you—if you will let me.

I cannot look back to old times—my first days in the world, my dear

Mat, without a mixture of pleasure and sorrow; and now, that seventeen years have rolled over our heads (and rubbed almost all the hair off mine) I own I am anxious once more to shake you by the hand.

I enclose Mrs. Mathews two sketches of myself at different periods, in order that, seeing what I *was*, she may not start with horror at seeing what I *am*. You will, I dare say, recognise the *genteel* one, which is done after your imitation of me. Pray, make my best remembrances to her; and, if *Twig* (Lord, when I remember him as I do!) is with you, to him also.

You hate paying postage for nonsense—revenge yourself by writing me an answer; and so, my dear Mat, good night, and God bless you.

Yours always, THEODORE HOOK.

On Mr. Mathews's return to London, he entered upon an engagement at the English Opera-house to perform in the drama. He met with a most enthusiastic welcome, and attracted crowded houses. During this period he performed the characters of *Monsieur Tonson*, *Caleb Quotem*, and some other old favourites with the town, prefacing his dramatic performance with one of his mono-dramatic pieces, "The Polly Packet."

At the close of the English Opera-house, the following allusion to Mr. Mathews's late performance was made in the farewell speech of the season, delivered by Mr. Bartley:—

The first appearance of Mr. Mathews in the drama for six years has been greeted with a warmth of feeling bordering on enthusiasm; and the proprietor therefore congratulates himself on having been able to afford this welcome treat to the town, prior to an exhibition of the rich fund of character and anecdote which the quick perception, acute observation, and brilliant humour of that gentleman, has furnished for the budget of his next campaign, during his late trip to America.

Having concluded this engagement, Mr. Mathews proceeded to fulfil one in Dublin, for a month; prior to his return to town, in order to prepare for his re-appearance "At Home," in a new entertainment to be called his "Trip to America."

My husband could not patiently sit out a morning visit. He never took up anybody's time in this way, or what is termed *called* upon his most intimate friend. On such occasions in his own house, if he was caught, as he called it, by mere idlers, he would sit silent during their stay, leaving them upon my hands, unless directly appealed to, for he had no small-talk, neither could he tolerate commonplace, nor had he an ear for useless unprofitable remarks, and a truism almost offended him. Yet he loved trifling upon occasions, and indulged in it most amusingly. Newsmongers did not recom-

mend themselves to him; scandal he disdained and would not listen to, for he literally closed his hearing on the very first hint of it, by turning his face away, and, unperceived by the vendor, placing his fingers against the portals of his ears. This he did during vehement and causeless laughter. An angry voice or a cough was acutely felt by that delicate, and, in his case, painfully fastidious organ.

Yet bored as he felt, and sullen as he appeared with such visitors during their stay, the moment he saw them departing, his good-nature and innate sense of propriety prevailed over personal inconvenience, and he would suddenly relent, and invariably follow them into the hall, and begin a sort of conversation, detaining them in the most agreeable manner, even against his own wish, from the dread of having hurt their feelings by his neglect during their visit.

When we removed to London, the space between the entrance to the interior of the house being so much shorter than from the gate to the porch of the cottage, people were apt to surprise him sometimes before he could say nay. This disconcerted him during the whole morning. After some time, I caused a middle door to be placed in the hall, intercepting his library, and contrived to have an eyelet-hole made in one corner of it, with a piece of plate-glass artfully inserted, so that when a bore knocked at a time positively unwelcome or inconvenient to listen to his gentle dulness, my husband would peep through the glass, and by silence exclude him; the signal for the servant admitting any person was the tinkle of a little silver bell by Mr. Mathews. By this little stratagem I saved him many an uncomfortable hour, though then I was not aware how vitally important it was for him at this period to be guarded from annoyance.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Dublin, Sept. 29th, 1823.

I arrived at Dunleary early this morning, making the passage in twelve hours and a half, within half an hour of the quickest ever performed. The weather was beautiful and calm, and the voyage delightful. I am settled at Seapoint, with a tilbury and gig, "and all that sort of thing," ready to convey me to Dublin—"and everything in the world." I could not get the whole of my luggage over in one vessel, and should not have got even a part in the *St. George*, had I not entreated with uplifted hands and tears in my eyes. I am obliged, therefore, to postpone my appearance until Thursday. The weather is divine, and you know how important that is to me. The view from Seapoint is enchanting. We had *only* two hundred haymakers on board, who kicked up such a bobbery that it was quite a

burlesque to attempt sleeping, as all those confessed who tried. I sat up with three or four choice spirits, and we laughed at their simplicity; but I am no sufferer, thank God! being in such rude health, that "How fat you are!" has been my reception hitherto.

C. MATHEWS.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Seapoint, Oct. 3rd, 1823.

On Tuesday the sports began—my old Dublin tortures. Every house I look at associates—postman—no letter—delay, &c.; so often have I been in suspense here. Pray write often. One single line yesterday, just before I went on the stage, would have set me up for the night.

I opened last night, and with great success. My reception equal to the English Opera first night. The Whist Song, a great hit; "Crooskeen Lawn," encored, and every Irish joke received with roars. This shows great good-nature and liberality, certainly. I trembled for the Whist Song,* and it was one of the most effective things. Everything went off well.

C. MATHEWS.

* The whole of which he gave in a variety of brogues.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Mr. Mathews's reluctance to give offence in his representation of American character—Letter on this subject from Mr. James Smith—Letters to Mrs. Mathews: Irish anecdotes: danger of suffocation: arrival in Wales—Mr. Mathews's new entertainment, the "Trip to America"—Account of the performance.

If no other evidence of Mr. Mathews's consideration respecting his forthcoming representation of American character had been manifest, the following letter, in reply to his reluctance to give offence, and his anxiety to bestow praise, would be sufficient to convince the Americans how tenderly scrupulous my husband felt of any mention that might be distasteful to the country which had so recently treated him with kindness and attention. Mr. Smith's letter was dictated by a business-like view of the subject, unallied to the remotest prejudice on his own part, or a desire to encourage it in others. As the author of the Enterment, he was naturally anxious to seize upon those incidents and characteristics best suited to interest and entertain, and he thought it fair to proceed as he had previously done, when his own country and countrymen were the subjects.

To C. Mathews, Esq.

Oct. 4th, 1823.

Dear Mathews,—I think "General Jackson" will be a hit. Your Anglo-Gallic will come well into play, and "Malbrook" is a taking air. In the introduction, where you end by saying, "A hundred verses, of which I unfortunately only retain ten," say, "unfortunately (or perhaps I should say *fortunately*")."* This self-humility will cause you to be exalted. I cannot agree with you as to the necessity of complimenting the Americans. "The theatre," says Puff, in the *Critic*, "might be made an admirable school of morality; at present, however, I am sorry to say, people go there chiefly for their diversion." In like manner,

* "General Jackson." In allusion to a ludicrous and almost interminable song, sung by a Frenchman in America in praise of General Jackson, which Mr. Mathews had forwarded to Mr. Smith to amuse him, and of which he introduced a portion in the "Trip to America."

the town comes to "Mathews at Home" for a laugh—*at* him, if he fail, and *with* him if he succeed. I have no objection, however, to a complimentary final speech; something like this:—"May nothing separate England and America but the billows of the Atlantic." That will be going off with a bounce. Your having been hospitably received in America is nothing to me, and worse than nothing to the audience. You may have a private reason of your own, why two and two should make six, but they will only make four, notwithstanding (*Johnson!*).

And now, my good fellow, I will quote to you a case in point. Last Saturday I dined at the Beefsteak Club. Charles Morris has a song quizzing the Yankees, to the tune of "Yankee Doodle." He was asked to sing it. To this he objected thus:—"Oh no, my dear boys, anything else. It won't be safe."—"Why not safe?" "Why, although at my age it is not very likely that I shall ever revisit America, yet, if I should, were my singing that song to get wind, the President might make America decidedly uncomfortable to me." We all took our oaths not to betray him. Whereupon, pointing up to a motto from Horace, suspended over the fire-place, and ejaculating "*Fides inter amicos*," with a mysterious air, he started off with his song. On the following day I met Washington Irving, and most treacherously divulged to him the whole transaction, adding these words: "Now, pray don't tell this to the President of the United States; for, if you should, he would make America devilish uncomfortable to Charles Morris." "No, I wont," was his humane considerate reply.

Yours very truly, JAMES SMITH.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Seapoint, Oct. 15th, 1823.

As there is no post to-morrow, I write a few lines to say I am quite well; never better; and all is well.

A little *bit* of Irish:—I desired to be called yesterday morning. I was not obeyed. The man who waits on Elder and me was taken to task for it. He said, "I came into your room, sirr; but you were asleep, and so I did not call you." "If I had been awake, you would, then?" "I should, sirr."

Epitaph on a child six weeks old:—

I wonder what I was begun for,
Since I was so soon done for.

I rejoice to hear you are going on so well in planting. "God prosper you, *ma'am*, in your *endeaviours*." My houses keep up to the mark. I get from 50*l.* to 70*l.* per night. The "Polly Packet" a greater hit than the other. *Daniel O'Rourke* an uproarious favourite. "Disperse," a screech. Indeed, I have every reason to be more than flattered, after Catalani's prodigious haul.

A lady here has a *Dow Buckinghamish* sort of *beard*. A gentle-

man to-day said, "It would be indelicate to mention it, though somebody ought to tell her of it. I think I'll send her an anonymous razor." The same lady was rather gummy about the ankles. The man observed, "She has patent heels, to keep the dust out of her shoes," &c.

C. MATHEWS.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Seapoint, Oct. 20th, 1823.

I wish you would write a line to James Smith, and ask if he received the packet I sent him when he was at Mr. Hope's, and when I may expect some, for my anticipations as to the Entertainment begin to be alarming. In former times I have been perfect in three or four songs by the month of November. I dined yesterday with Lord Combermere, who has a house at Monkstown. We had a great laugh over the old story of Major Johnson, and the bishop and the lion. I had a very pleasant day—quite comfortable. Show me a bedroom, I'll swear to people's habits who have furnished it.

I made an angry reply to a beggar-woman to-day:—"I have no money." "Good luck to you, leave us a lock of your hair." Adieu!

C. MATHEWS.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Dublin, Oct. 20th, 1823.

I am *beautifully* well. Such divine weather I have never seen for so many days together in my life. I need not comment on the news about Mitford.*

Houses keep up to the average I sent you, and everything is right. I am in robust health, and, for me, good spirits. Am rather fatigued with avoiding invitations, but am stout. I wander daily from four to five hours alone, and revel in the solitude I so much prefer to talking. I have hired a chariot for my play-nights. I seldom come home alone. Last night a party of twelve of the boarders went to the theatre, and returned to supper, very jolly, quite in my way. Then I *can* talk, because I ought not, I suppose. A Galway gentleman here said, "I shall go into the 32nd regiment; I shall be nearer my brother, who is in the 31st."†

The following is a fact:—The present sheriff at his dinner, when somebody proposed the Duke of Wellington's health—"The First Captain of the Age"—actually gave out "The First *Chaplain* of the Age!" He is a cutler, and when his health was proposed, a wag whispered to the band, who had played appropriate tunes to the other

* Another of his honourable debtors.

† This anecdote has been introduced by Mr. Lever into "Charles O'Malley," and put into the mouth of the celebrated Dr. Morris Quill.

toasts, to play "Terry heigho the *Grinder!*" which was done! The king shook hands with a peasant, when he was here, who said, "I'll not wash that hand for a twelvemonth." One little bit at parting:—A drunken fellow taken home by his friend, was challenged by another: "Who is that? Where are you going?" &c. "Why, I think your friend has had too much?" "Why, I think he had better have divided it fairly, half to-day and half to-morrow." A watchman came up. "How much has he drunk?" said a by-stander. "A gallon at laste!" "Then I take him into custody for carrying off a gallon of liquor without a *permit!*"

C. Mathews.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Liverpool, Nov. 4th, 1823.

As there are perils by land, as well as by sea, I think it is proper, right, respectful, and dutiful, to inform you of my safe arrival here, after a very narrow escape from smothering. Don't be alarmed—only from human breaths. With three such brutes never did man travel! There was no possibility of getting a breath of air, but by quarrelling. Not even the commonplace politeness of a coach-traveller was practised: "Would it be agreeable to have this window up?" No, up it went! I watched them to sleep, stole it down. In a few minutes, up!—and down again; and so on, without a word. Three great hulking rascals, too, and afraid of cold, pretty dears! All Lancashire men of commerce! I could make no impression. At last, when we stopped to change horses, I engaged an Irishman, who had been a brother in affliction in the packet with me, and an outside passenger, to break the window with his heel, which I paid for; and thus I arrived alive. If I can judge of physiognomy, which I had the opportunity of studying at breakfast, at Chester, I was suspected. I determined to put it out of all doubt before we parted; and when I was no longer doomed to keep *company*, in the boat crossing the Mersey, I asked the guard the price of the glass, and paid for it, to the utter amazement of the calico-printers. The faces of the party would have been a subject for Wilkie; particularly the Irishman and the guard, who evidently had a perception of the humorous.

I was too much elated upon my landing, after such horrors, and the sight of the dear little Welsh hats, and the clean faces, and the comfortable appearance of a wretched Welsh town, and mixing with inhabitants where murder is unknown! to think of expressing anything but pleasure at being safe; I therefore forgot to announce the receipt of this renowned manuscript, this mysterious American packet, which has made more noise than ever stupid negro song created before; for it is literally nothing else. It is the mountain and the mouse. I don't know which was the greatest ass, the man who wrote it, or the man that sent it. It would not have been tolerable without the excitement

of three weeks' expectation and suspense, but with it, the reading was an absolute affliction. But no matter, let that end.

I arrived here this morning, after fifteen hours, from Holyhead. It would not have suited my poor little trembling wife. Three ferries had I to cross to avoid Parkgate,—three of them! and two in the dark; first, Bangor, then Conway, and then the Mersey. Luckily, the weather was very fine. In wet weather I have no notion of so miserable a journey, as that must be. I got here at seven o'clock, none the worse, thank God! I can say no more on the Mitford business than I did before. Here's human nature! What a piece of work is man! How villanous in conception! how deformed in all his propensities! how base to his fellow man! how doubly base to a woman!

This is a drunken-looking letter on reading it over; but four hours' sleep have not recovered me, strong as I am, from the last four days' real fatigue and anxiety. I am *ferry* tired. God love and preserve my dearest wife for her affectionate husband,

C. MATHEWS.

On March 25th, Mr. Mathews performed his new Entertainment at the English Opera-house, called, as the bill of the night will show, his

TRIP TO AMERICA.

PART I.—Exordium.—Tourists.—Embarking on Board the *William Thompson.*—Speaking Trumpet.—Whimsical Coincidence of Names.—Yellow Fever.—In Sight of New York.—Land at Hoboken.—New Brunswick.—English Importations.—Jack Topham and his Cousin Bray.—Waterloo Hotel, Liverpool, contrasted with Washington Hotel, Elizabeth Town.—American Phrases expounded.—Cool Landlord.—Hot Wine.—Arrival at Bristol (in America).—First Appearance at Baltimore.—Philadelphia.—Steam-boat and Stage-coach Characters.—Arrival at New York.

Song—*Mrs. Bradish's Boarding House.*

More Characters.—American Fun.—Mr. Raventop, the American Jester.—Major Grimstone, "very well."—Mr. Pennington.—American Strictures on English Tourists.—War.—Public Dinner.—General Jackson.—French Poet Laureat.

Song—*Ode to General Jackson.*

American Army.—Irregular Regulars.—Muskets and Umbrellas.

Song—*Militia Muster Folk.*

PART II.—African Theatre.—Black Tragedian, "*To be, or not to be!*"

Song—*Opossum up a Gum Tree;* real negro melody.

Definition of the word Yankee.—Jack Topham on the Natives.—Arrival at Boston.—Bunker's Hill.—A REAL Yankee, Jonathan W. Doubikin, and his Uncle Ben.—John and Jonathan on "I guess," and "You know."—Mons. Mallet.—Election.

Song—*Boston Post Office.*

Providence.—Enticements for Mr. Mathews to Perform.—Court of Justice.—Charge to the Jury.—Emigration discouraged by a British Farmer.—Disabled Goods and Chattels.

Song—*Illinois Inventory.*

Maximilian the Nigger (*Anglice*, Negro), and the Snuffbox—Preparations to depart.—Farewell Finale.

Part III.—A Monopolylogue, called

All Well at Nachitoches!

Colonel Hiram Peglar, a Kentucky Shoemaker.
Agamemnon, a poor runaway Negro.
Jonathan W. Doubikin, a real Yankee (his master).
Monsieur Capote, a French Emigrant Tailor.
Mr. O'Sullivan, an Irish Improver of his Fortune.

*** All the Characters of the Entertainment to be represented by Mr. Mathews.

The following will convey the pith of the various accounts of this Entertainment published at the time:—

Mr. Mathews, in his late trip to America, has not failed to catch many of the leading characteristics of *Jonathan*, for the amusement of his friend *John*. He commences his "Lecture" on the peculiarities, characters, and manners he has seen during his late trans-Atlantic trip, by observing, that the same motive which induced Columbus to quit his native shores, also impelled him to undertake this voyage—the "*auri sacra fames.*" After a ludicrous account of his embarking on board the *William Thompson*, and an introduction to his friends *Jack Topham* and his *Cousin Bray*, the former a determined punster, and the latter an enthusiastic admirer of his relation's wit, we become acquainted with an American landlord, the coolness of whose temper, and the heat of whose wine, form a curious contrast to the ready accommodation of an English house of reception. This phlegmatic host is described to have had curiosity in his eye, and a segar in his mouth. He gets dinner for nobody who comes after his usual hour, and treats his customers as if they were soliciting a favour rather than conferring a benefit. The port-wine is mistaken by *Jack* for "mulled Day and Martin," and the other parts of the Entertainment, which were procured with so much difficulty, were equally doubtful to the well-practised taste of a Londoner.

At Baltimore Mr. Mathews meets with so much kindness and hospitality that he was inclined to think himself "at home." He regrets that tourists, who satirise the places they visit with so much asperity, should not first examine their own capabilities of enjoyment before they deal so harshly with those whose kindness deserves a better return than the unmerited disgust which has sometimes been excited against them,

by those who carried discontent in their own breasts, and were predetermined to be displeased with everything. On board the steam-packet, which transports our hero to Philadelphia, an Irishman, who has never yet set eyes on a turtle, and is as little acquainted with its appearance as its taste, is anxious to know whether those on board are "real or mock turtle." The roads in America, it appears, have not yet been improved by that Colossus in the art of road-making, Mr. M'Adam; and upon the sensitive traveller no trifling pain is inflicted during his transportations in those moving dungeons the American stage-coaches.

To follow Mr. Mathews during the whole of his eccentric career would be impossible. We must pass over much accurate delineation of national manner, and many happy descriptions of individual character. At the latter end of the Second Part we have a description of a "charge to a grand-jury" by an American judge, of the most ludicrous nature. Among other learned definitions which this legal prodigy lays down to the jurymen is, that bigamy is constituted by a man marrying two wives, and polygamy by a woman marrying more than two husbands.

Part the Third contains a monopolylogue, called "All Well at Nachitoches!" in which Mr. Mathews represents six characters with wonderful ability and adroitness. In the course of the entertainment we were furnished with many highly amusing sketches of American character and independence. Mr. Mathews, however, never deals harshly either with the national manners or individual peculiarities, and takes every opportunity of doing justice to the good fellowship with which he was treated. Mr. Mathews's trip will, no doubt, prove equally attractive with his former amusements, and draw, whenever he is "At Home," a crowded audience. We should observe, that all the characters of the evening's entertainment are represented by Mr. Mathews, with the exception of that of a live pony, which is merely introduced because he is wanted to draw.

The picture of a French emigrant, a *Monsieur Mallet*, was a powerful piece of acting. We never beheld anything more complete, masterly, and affecting. Poor *Mallet* anxiously expected a letter at the Boston post-office from his family; and though it was there all the time of his numerous inquiries, he did not receive it for weeks, owing to the French pronunciation of his name, *Mallay*. "Had you said Mallet," coolly replied the Republican, "I should have known." The varied emotions of the Frenchman—joy at having received the letter, and rage against the office-keeper for detaining it, during the expression of which he unconsciously tears the unread letter to tatters—were vigorously portrayed. The whole of this episode was, perhaps, the ablest piece of acting in the production.*

We "guess" that we may "calculate" on a "pretty considerable" intermingling in our conversations of the American colloquialisms and idioms.

* An Irish critic observed upon this episode that "if Sterne had written it he would have selected Mathews to represent it," adding, that "it was intensely affecting, and the more affecting from the glare of humour, and joke, and merriment, with which this deep shade of tragedy was surrounded."

CHAPTER XXX.

Letter from the Right Honourable J. W. Croker to Mr. Mathews—Letter to Mrs. Mathews: Disturbance at the Dublin Theatre—Mr. Talbot's attempts to thwart the success of Mr. Mathews—Letters to Mrs. Mathews: passage to Ireland — Unlucky speculations of Mr. Mathews — Letters to Mrs. Mathews.

EARLY in the year 1824, a new club-house was formed, called the Athenæum, and Mr. Mathews became a member of it, through the following complimentary medium:—

To Charles Mathews, Esq.

Admiralty, 23rd March, 1824.

DEAR SIR,—At a meeting of the New Literary and Scientific Club, held yesterday, I did myself the honour of proposing you as a member of that institution; and I was unanimously authorized to acquaint you that the Club will be most happy if you should be inclined to join our society. I enclose you a prospectus and list of the names of our present members, and have the honour to be,

Your faithful humble servant, J. W. CROKER.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Dublin, Wednesday.

I enclose, per Speaker's frank, some report of my progress. *Tonson* is a great choke-pear. G—y cut me; would Talbot had done the same, or rather, Mrs. Talbot. I have not time to write full particulars; but the enclosed extract of a paper, marked No. 1, will give you some notion of the disgraceful scene that took place on Monday night. Talbot is the stock *Morbleu*, which he makes a monkey—a ballet-master—in short, a stage Frenchman. Mrs. Talbot is the greatest intriguer in the world; you recollect the Limerick plot?

Theatre Royal.—Tuesday evening's entertainment should have concluded with *Monsieur Tonson.* We have often admired Mr. Talbot in the character of *Monsieur Tonson;* and the praises of the London critics had prepared us for being equally delighted and amused by Mr. Mathews. We have been disappointed,—not through any fault of Mr. Mathews, but by the disgraceful conduct of a few persons in the galleries, who commenced hissing and calling for Talbot as soon as Mathews

appeared, although the whole house (with the exception of these few) "applauded him to the very echo." Mr. Mathews felt himself unable to proceed, and retired from the stage. In a few minutes Mr. Farren came forward, and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, it is with the greatest reluctance I appear before you; but, at the solicitation of Mr. Mathews, I beg to know how he has incurred your displeasure." Several voices called out that the disturbance was caused by some fellows in the middle gallery.

Mr. Mathews then came forward and was received with loud applause; but he had scarcely proceeded twenty lines when the uproar compelled him to leave the stage a second time. Mr. Abbot then came forward, and begged leave to inform the audience that Mr. Mathews had performed the character of *Monsieur Morbleu* with the most decided success in London. He had come here with considerable inconvenience to himself to serve him (Mr. Abbot), and had always been heretofore welcomed by the Dublin audience, which he (Mr. Abbot) could perceive was the case at present, with a very slight exception; but even partial displeasure was so unusual to Mr. Mathews, that he felt himself unable to proceed until it was removed. Mr. Abbot concluded by saying he was certain it proceeded from Mr. Talbot's pretended friends, and that it was most disagreeable to that gentleman.

After this address the piece was suffered to proceed without interruption until the middle of the second act, when the hissing was again resumed. Mr. Mathews then addressed the audience in nearly the following words:—

"Ladies and gentlemen,—I am totally unprepared for such an attack as this, and am therefore incapable of answering it. I had flattered myself that I had played the character of *Morbleu* in London with some success; and I feel that I shall not at this time of life, supported with the approbation of a London audience, shrink into insignificance at so paltry a show of displeasure. I have always received a most liberal share of support from the Dublin audience. However, if they should now express their disapprobation of me, I shall bow to it with the greatest humility. The only mortification I shall feel is my consequent inability to do justice to the character."

It was destined that, in all Mr. Mathews's engagements in Ireland, something quite apart from public and general feeling, something harassing and irritating to his temper, was to take place, and put him out of humour for the time. The present was a very flagrant case of baseness. It appeared, since the early days when the names of Talbot and Mathews were first coupled, that Mr. Talbot had descended from his tragedy stilts "to shuffle about as the lean and slippered pantaloon" of farce. From that time friendship seemed to have subsided in the breast of Mr. Talbot into a foolish attempt at rivalry. In 1808, some "compunctious visitings" of a transient kind induced him, after

receiving an undeserved instance of Mr. Mathews's kindness, to address a long letter to him, from which I extract the most material part.

Allow me to express now the pleasure you have afforded me, and the high idea you have forced me to conceive of your heart, by the kindness you have bestowed, and the cordiality you have received me with, after the coolness of my conduct towards you, and the censure and abuse I so liberally bestowed upon you. Not to dwell on a subject which occasions me some feelings of remorse, a letter wherein I thought we were jointly reflected on, by insinuation after our visit to Wales, was the principal cause of my conduct.

Your sincere friend, MONTAGUE TALBOT.

After this letter, the friends never met until the year 1816, when Mr. Talbot had a relapse of his weakness; and it followed that, because Mr. Mathews was engaged to perform in Limerick, at the principal theatre, while Mr. Talbot was manager of a minor one, every mean contrivance was resorted to to injure the receipts of the major establishment (traced to Mr. Talbot)—such as paragraphs asserting the utter want of safety in the building, if crowded, &c.; and though we had never seen him from the time of the paragraph I have extracted from his letter, and therefore could not have offended him, he neither called nor took any notice during our stay in Limerick, but in the manner above described.

The following is Mr. Mathews's account to me of the recent circumstance:—

I was attacked with hisses—Off!—off!—Talbot!—Talbot!—before I spoke one word. Fellows were taken up all armed with bludgeons. The managers had hints that something was likely to occur on my opening night; and Abbot and Farren were prepared by anonymous letters for the direct war of Monday night, though I was not. It was a painful situation. My pride supported me; nothing ever did brace my nerves and rouse my energies equal to an undeserved hiss.

In the second act I left the stage, with a determination never to set foot on it again. I begged of Abbot to gratify my pride by going on the stage to say that I had withdrawn myself.

The stage was unoccupied for at least ten minutes, during which time I had been firm of purpose: Abbot and Farren both petitioning me to go on. I positively refused; but a cue for the demolition of the chandelier being given, I dreaded further row for Abbot's sake, and therefore repented and rushed on. I never behaved so well to myself.

One part of my speech is too tamely reported in the account of it. I said these exact words:—"If in your judgment I am unqualified to perform the part of *Morbleu*, I must necessarily bow to your decision; but I beg it may be distinctly understood, that having for years been

honoured with the approbation of a London audience, no mark of displeasure here can make me shrink into insignificance, and much less the paltry attempts made by a hired party." If I had not been cheered after this as I was, I had arranged another sentence in my mind; I however conquered. Last night was a very fine house; and the "Trip" was received with acclamations; and my Irishman, which I always contend is not appreciated in London, was my greatest hit of the night. I was huzzaed at the close.

If I have not directed properly to the Speaker, you will tell me so. The conspiracy has served me, and my independence is applauded by those whose opinions are worth having.

CHARLES MATHEWS.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Seapoint, Oct. 17th, 1824.

I am going on in the same steady course, which will give me about 500*l.* sterling, I expect, clear of all expenses. When I came, my friends all pulled faces, and thought me a "little d—d mad," to come at this period after the greatest drag ever known in Dublin.

Plant away—plant away! A very disagreeable, stiff, vulgar, young woman here, fancying herself quite *illigant*, said the other day, in confidence to another female, "There is not a gintleman in the house. Wait till my brother comes; then they'll see a gintleman." He arrived, and a more unlicked cub I never saw. His gentility consisted entirely in mincing the language which he flattered himself he was speaking with proper nicety:—"It's a favourable *dee* to see the *bee. Weeter*, bring the *tay*." "I went to the *veel* of *Avoca*, and *ate* so much *vale* that my *hid eched*," &c. After two days' knowledge of him, the friend said: "Ah! Miss M——, when does your other brother come?" Ha! neat.

C. MATHEWS.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Dublin, Dec. 8th, 1824.

It snowed the whole way to Conway Ferry. We turned out of a warm coach, and walked a quarter of a mile to the ferry. Snowing! wet boat! wet feet! wet everything! Trundled in, and tumbled out in fifteen miles more. Crossed Bangor. More wet boats and boots. Here I brought guard to confession, that the packet did not wait one minute beyond nine for the Chester mail. It was then half-past six instead of three, and we had twenty-three miles to go. I told guard and coachman, that if I was too late for the packet I would bring an action against the proprietors. By galloping we arrived at five minutes to nine. Six minutes later, I should have seen the smoke from the chimney of the steamer scudding from English land, and had twenty-four hours to spend at the World's End. This was my first piece of

good fortune. The day was lovely, and I enjoyed my passage much. The next morning it blew a gale, and rained all day.

How extraordinary that the snow did not reach you! It never ceased from the time I awoke on Saturday morning until four on Sunday morning; and here there was skating on Sunday. I had not time for breakfast at Holyhead, so by a curious fatality I was thirty-six hours without a meal, and should have been forty but for the sandwiches. It is quite a prejudice that eating is necessary on a journey. Yesterday I walked half a mile before I could find a chemist's; at last I pounced upon one. "Any healing plaister?" "We have not, surr." Walked to a second: same answer. A third; the same; until I was at a loss to conjecture why I could not be served. I was directed to an apothecary's. Still "No." At last it occurred to me to try a new expedient. "Can you not procure or prepare me some *hale*ing plaister?" The mystery was solved; my unfortunate English accent was not to be understood by these illigant Irish spakers.

Ever affectionately, &c., C. MATHEWS.

At the end of this year Mr. Mathews was induced, by the persuasions of some interested persons, to embark large sums in the purchase of shares in two "Companies;" and not only did he eventually lose all the money which he had at various times paid for the shares, but he had to avert actions afterwards brought against him as a shareholder, for sums due to the tradesmen employed by the Companies. I pass over these events as rapidly as possible, as a detail of them would be very uninteresting and tedious to the reader, as well as painful to my own feelings, which suffered intensely at the time.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Newry, Jan. 4th, 1825.

I have to announce again my safe arrival. I finished last night at Belfast, and made by my week 110*l.* This was in proportion better than Dublin; but this is a distracted country, and theatricals suffer in common with the rest. I need not say that your letter to-day, which welcomed me as I got into the chaise (indeed I waited for it), filled these eyes with tears which would have been dry enough at parting with ——. The opinion of the dear Speaker of our blessing and treasure was as gratifying to me to read as I am sure it was to you to write. God bless him and you, and preserve you both to him who lives but for you, unalterably and affectionately.

C. MATHEWS.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Newry, Jan. 12th, 1825.

How are you all at Highgate, you happy creatures? "How little does the landsman know!" Ah! very fine! Well; the letter opposite must be sealed; and when shaken to be then taken—as directed.

C. MATHEWS.

I have nothing to say and no time to say it in. By the time you receive this I shall have arrived, please God, and have performed, in Liverpool. "This country never was, and never will be, what it was before the union." (!) "Good! now that I heard."

C. MATHEWS.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Liverpool, Jan. 11th, 1825.

Another safe arrival, thank God! after the much-dreaded Liverpool passage. I did not come by Parkgate, indeed. I left Dublin at half-past two yesterday, and before six was in bed at the Waterloo, having been only thirteen hours on the passage, most calm and delightful, and not to be expected at this time of the year. The instant I was up I was obliged to go to the theatre; and you may perhaps fancy the sort of day I have spent. Strange dressers, strange musician, strange everything. I have been six hours hard at work, and have only just time to get my dinner and return to my work. I am blessed with my usual strength, and more than usual in my hip, that was lame. It will be enough, I trust, to say, that England has cheered me on my arrival from Ireland. All the dress-boxes are taken for to-night and Thursday; and as the town cannot be accommodated in two nights, such is their anxiety to hear my "Trip," they hope I will stay a third. Bravo!

C. MATHEWS.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Liverpool, Jan. 20th, 1825.

Not so great last night; but the book is capital for to-morrow. This trip will give me nearly 500*l.* in the five nights. Bravo!—the greatest thing I have ever done out of London. I am childishly impatient now to get home, where I hope to find you and dear Charles well. I am in excellent health and spirits, cheered greatly, too, by my faith in Messrs. Grey and Brodie.

C. MATHEWS.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Mr. Mathews's new entertainment, called his "Memorandum Book"—Programme—Description of the performance—Letter from Mr. J. G. Lockhart to Mr. Mathews—Letters to Mrs. Mathews: Plymouth gaieties: Expedition to Loo—Letter to Mrs. Mathews: Mr. Farley and the cat in the boot—Mr. Mathews's visit to Scotland—Letter to Mrs. Mathews: Introduction of Mr. C. J. Mathews to Sir Walter Scott: Invitation to Abbotsford: Sir Walter and the novels—Anecdote of an old laird—A Scotch hackney-coachman.

After the rehearsal dinner at the cottage, to the select and critical friends who annually favoured my husband with their "most attentive hearing," and made their valuable comments upon his forthcoming Entertainment, he once more opened the English Opera-house with new materials, in the form of—

MR. MATHEWS'S MEMORANDUM-BOOK

Of Peculiarities, Characters, and Manners, collected during his various Trips.

Part I.—Family Fireside.—Thoughts on Trips.—Mrs. Tinsel, of —— Parish.—Charitable Neighbour.—John's Wages.—Memorandum-Book Opened.

Song—*Memoranda in Confusion.*

Authors, Actors, Managers, and Critics.—Mr. King of the Crown.—Regal Innkeeper.—King, Lords, and Commons.—Nat Glibb.—Waiter.—Prime Minister.—"Make every Body Comfortable."

Song—*Night Coach.*

Mr. Doublechin.—A Lady of some Weight.—Mr. Frost.—Improvident Traveller. Mr. Quiverton.—Everlasting Singer.—Testy.—Jonathan on the Roof.—Travelling Astronomer.—How to prevent Sleep in a Coach.—Mr. Allum, the Writing Chemist, and his Uncle, Mr. Christopher Chyle.—Food and Poison.—Mr. Allbutt.—The Fortunate Youth, and his Friend, a Man of Few Words.—Old Startle.—Calamities of Prosperity.—How to dispose of your Money.

Song—*Bubbles, a Capital Song.*

Speculations.—Shares.—Companies.—Sinking Funds.—Gas.—Mr Fleece.—Tunnels.—Silver Mines.—Lord Drowsy.—Unique Projects.

PART II.—Coffee House.—Allum.—Chyle.—Death in the Pot.—Scientific Starvation.—Adulteration.—Bread, Wine, Coffee.—Tea and Milk Analyzed.—Mr. Allbutt.

Song—*Sailing Match.*

Preparations for a Boat-full of Pleasure.—Mr. Brownrigg and Family.—Mr. Literal.—Ballustrade Pillory.—Politesse of Lord Chesterfield.—Lumbago.—Antelope and Penelope.—Royal Anecdote.—Sailing Match Lost.—Music on the Water.—Catastrophe.—Kemble and Bensley.—Hamlet and Ghost.—Red Arsenic.—Methusalem.—Country Bank Notes.—Solicitors.—"As you were," and "As you are."

Song—*Old and New Times.*

M'Adam.—Coffee-houses and Club-houses.—Working Company.—Civility to Animals, &c.—Invitation to Dinner.—Chyle's Haunch.—Deaf Housekeeper.—Trumpet Duet without Music.—Novel Watchman.—"What's o'clock?"

Song—*Public Office in Bow-street.*

Night Charges.—Mr. Chubb and his Wooden Leg.—Wizen and O'Halloran.—Miss Fumbustle.—Desperate Assault.—Voiceless Complainant.—Ebenezer Dumps and his Bail.—O'Fagan and his Wife.—Hibernian Dispute.—Native Witnesses.—Illegality of Police Reports.—Mr. Mathews going to Gloucester.—Mr. and Mrs. Chyle.—Allum.—"Finale," by Mr. Mathews, Mrs. Chyle, Mr. Chyle, Mr. Allum, and Allbutt's Friend.

PART III.—A Monopolylogue, to be called the

Crown In-n Danger.

Nat Glibb, a Waiter.	Mr. Mathews!
Friaswaffer, a Tender-hearted German Cook .	Mr. Mathews!!
Molly Gramachree, an Itinerant from the Emerald Isle	Mr. Mathews!!!
Thady, her Son	Mr. Mathews!!!!
Mr. Christopher Chyle, come out Pleasuring .	Mr. Mathews!!!!!
Mr. Allum, come out Experimentalizing . .	Mr. Mathews!!!!!!
Brother Simple, of the Loyal Laughing Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons . . .	Mr. Mathews!!!!!!!

And, Mr. Mathews on a Provincial Trip.

Amongst the memorable guests at Ivy Cottage, the following short letter will record a name which I am proud to associate with that of my husband; regretting at the same time that I do not possess any more important communication from the same distinguished pen wherewith to grace these pages.

To C. Mathews, Esq.

Northumberland-street, Edinburgh, March, 1825.

Dear Sir,—I was asked lately by Mr. Croker to get for him a specimen of the handwriting of Home, author of "Douglas." I applied accordingly to his relations here, and have got more than I wanted; that is, two letters, and two scraps of the original rough draft of "Douglas."

It occurred to me that one letter and one bit of "Douglas" might be acceptable to you, in case you had not anything of Mr. Home's in your invaluable collection of autographs; so I accordingly enclose them.

May I beg you to present my best respects to Mrs. Mathews; and to assure her that I shall never forget the charming day I spent at the most charming of all cottages.

Yours very sincerely, J. G. Lockhart.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Brummy, Wednesday.

Though I am upon the wing to get out of this dull town, five miles to my namesake, Mathews, I cannot resist sending you a few lines, to thank you for your delightful communications. I had a letter from dear Charley yesterday, with seven verses of a song for Jonathan, out of which I can pick some very good ones. I wrote to thank him for his pains last night. I ruralized yesterday for a chop dinner; and, as I have nothing of my own to say, I will just give you a specimen of an epitaph that I think good. The mourning husband puts his initials at the bottom of the lines.

"Hannah, wife of George Onions.
She was—
But words are wanting to say what.
Look what a wife should be,
And she was that.
GO."

Affectionately yours, C. Mathews.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Plymouth, July 24th, 1825.

I have been junketing, and did not return until seven last night; when I found your welcome letter, announcing your and Charles's health. This morning I have received another letter from you, which has grieved me most sincerely. Your words are precisely what I should have written to another upon the melancholy subject of poor Louisa. Believe me, I am as much affected as you are. If she is allowed to move from London, I hope you will persuade her mother to let her come into

Devonshire. The air, I understand, is marvellous for consumptive people.*

I dine to-day with Lord Grey, who has come here for the health of his children. "Oh, the mayor of Loo." Liston's mayor is gone; but I saw one. Captain Cox, whom I met at Stephenson's, made me promise to visit him at Loo. Such an expedition! I shall never forget it; but must reserve the description until I see you. The commencement of the expedition will give you some little idea of it, and that you shall have. I received a note saying that if I would embark on board the Falmouth steam-boat, Captain Cox would come off in a boat from Loo, where the steam-boat will not land passengers. Well, he came not! Boat-signal hoisted—gun fired—all to no purpose—no boat. What is to be done? Where can I land? Must I go to Falmouth, forty-five miles, and no getting back in time to act to-morrow? "No: land you at Towey; nine miles further, and twelve from Loo." Anything! Put me on shore. Not one gig or carriage of any description to be had; only saddle-horses. G—— and I mounted, with a guide on foot, carrying our bags. Precipices to ride over—the guide had never been the road! and such a road I never saw in the wildest part of America! Frequently we encountered four roads, and sometimes six; a stone for a direction-post occasionally occurred, on one side of which appeared "Loo," and on the other "Lost," being an abbreviation of Lostwithiel. We were four hours and a half in a broiling sun, which peeled the skin quite off my nose.—Epitaph at Loo:—

"Here lies
The blighted hopes of a Mother,
And the blasted expectations of a Father."

I have received nearly 200*l.* by my week. Very great indeed. I shall do as well at Exeter. No start can do better than the year 1825!

Not a bit of my head complaint from the time I sniffed the sea-air. I have been three hours in the bay to-day. Pray convey love to Louisa, and my most affectionate condolence to her mother.

Ever affectionately yours, C. MATHEWS.

P.S. A very pleasant day indeed at Lord Grey's.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Cheltenham, Oct. 14th, 1825.

"How sweet is our rest on Sunday!" I have got through a week of unparalleled fatigue; having played three nights running,—one at Gloucester, and last night here. I am, however, well, notwithstanding the worry I have suffered in rehearsing.

I am delighted at the cheerful tone of your letter, which is the first really merry letter I have received from you since I left home. I never will believe you are well when I cannot make out your writing. Not

* This deep concern related to the present Mrs. Fairlie.

one word have I squeezed out of you in reply to any of mine. Look over my last, if you have kept it.

Farley* and I are left to breakfast alone. We had, or rather I had, such a joke against him! I have picked up a curious imitation, and with it a story of Sir I—c C——n,—a most absurd, insane, eccentric propensity of the admiral; the hero of which is a cat put in a boot. I had convulsed Farley with laughter at this story; he roared whenever I reminded him of it, even by one word. I went over to Gloucester with Charles Young, to see the play and return with him in his phaeton. Farley was acting in the after-piece of the "Broken Sword," and in perfect earnest pouring out his melodramatic sentiment, when suddenly a tall figure in a red cloak, with his back to the audience, tall hat, very high feathers, stalked across the stage, with a boot in his hand, from the top of which peeped out the head of a kitten, which was evidently struggling for escape. I was on and off like lightning. He was so completely overcome that he screeched with laughter, and ran off. Imagine the rest.

There is not a word about poor Louisa—not a word about the new Entertainment—whether Charles has heard of the plan, &c.

Ever affectionately yours, C. MATHEWS.

Shortly after the above correspondence, my husband and son (who was travelling with him) returned home, and at the appointed time proceeded without me to Scotland.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Edinburgh, 23rd Dec. 1825.

In addition to my own success here, which is keeping up to the mark, and will in all probability give me 500*l.* quite clear, I have to announce the success of our all in all, dear Charles. He first made a strong impression on Jeffery at Eckersall's (George)—no small boast. On Tuesday we met the man of men, the great Well-Known, at James Ballantyne's. Charles was all hopes, all fears. Ballantyne, with great kindness, placed him next Sir Walter at dinner. He soon cheered him with his affability; and his good humour brought out our son. He was very successful. Sir Walter was very much struck with the "Roman sermon," lauded it highly, and Charles's song was repeatedly cheered by him with "vary clever—oh, exceedingly good—excellent, indeed!" When I went into the drawing-room, Ballantyne took me with great mystery into his library, and said, "Your son has made a great impression on Sir Walter, and I think you ought to know it, and treasure it up. He said he was a very clever and a very modest young man; and added, that he was exceedingly struck with him."

This ended in an invitation to Abbotsford, and a request that I would bring Charles with me; and in his brief way, said: "He 's a very nice lad that, and exceedingly clever." Cadell met me next day, and said

* Charles Farley, a good actor and an excellent stage manager, died January, 1859, in the eighty-eighth year of his age.

what a valuable thing it was to Charles to have hit the bard so powerfully; "for you may depend upon this," said he, "Scott never flatters. His praise is indeed worth having." You may suppose how gratified papa was. Charles had the advantage, too, of meeting Mr. Playfair, the architect, who invited him next day, showed him his drawings, &c. In short, I look upon this trip as one of the most fortunate and important events in his life: and I have resolved, in spite of all pursuits in Wales, to keep him here to go to Abbotsford. We shall go after I have finished at Glasgow, about the 8th of January.

Luckily it has reconciled me to a disappointment which alone could have afforded me the opportunity of going myself: this gives me some spare days, which I am sure you will rejoice can be turned to such account for our good fellow. I hope you will feel as warmly as I do about this, and encourage me in encouraging him to neglect his business for such an event* Next to an invitation to Carlton House, I value this. He is the king of Scottish society; and none but persons of rank and talent can get invitations to Abbotsford. I am proud and happy!† Charles is already convinced of the value of the Scottish character. Not one instance of neglect, or falling off. Too many invitations. On Christmas Day we dine with Constable, near Roslyn Castle, and sleep there. For the first time in all our long acquaintance he has thrown off the veil of mystery respecting Scott and the novels. He told me that he is preparing for the press a novel called "Woodstock," and the "Life of Bonaparte." He called the other day, and found Scott with both manuscripts on the table, writing alternately a fragment of each. He said that his mind was relieved by leaving a dry matter of history to indulge in the imaginative, and equally so after indulging in the regions of fancy by returning to the contemplation of biographical facts. This will be a pretty bit for Mrs. Wilson and the disbelievers.‡

C. Mathews.

* Charles was building in Wales.

† "Mathews used often to refer with great delight," says Mr. Patmore, "and even with a tinge of personal pride (for it would be unjust to call it vanity), to his intimacy with Walter Scott, whom he visited several times at Abbotsford, when the poet was at the height of his fame and popularity as 'The Great Unknown.' Indeed, I do not call to mind a single instance, except that of Scott, in which his references to his intimacy with the great and distinguished of the world were blended with any appearance of exultation or self-satisfaction. But in the case of Scott, he evidently piqued himself upon the intercourse, as if he felt it to be an honour and a favour. He (Mathews) used to imitate the poet's tone, manner, and mode of speech, in a way that was quite delightful to those who, like myself, had never seen that illustrious man. This was the more striking from a remarkable resemblance which the eyes and brow of Mathews bore to the portraits, at least, of Scott. I believe I was the first to remark this resemblance; and Mathews was evidently not a little pleased with the observation. It was particularly conspicuous in a bust of Mathews by Behnes, I think," [the bust alluded to was Joseph's, and the resemblance spoken of has often been noticed,] "which used to form a part of his theatrical gallery at Kentish Town."

‡ In Mr. Patmore's "Recollections," that gentleman has attributed this

The circumstance of Mr. Mathews's dwelling in this letter so emphatically upon the superiority of the Scottish character, reminds me of several anecdotes related by him in reference to the lower orders of that country, who partook of the respect which the higher ranks excited in him at all times.

I remember his telling me a story of his having dined a short distance from Edinburgh, accompanied by an old laird much in the habit of exceeding discreet limits, when he found himself induced by good wine and good company to take more of the former than he was justified in doing. On the occasion in question, he had taken Mr. Mathews in his carriage to the house where they dined on a Saturday evening. On their return to Edinburgh after midnight, when they reached the toll-bar through which they had passed on the evening of the day before, the usual demand was made by the pretty daughter of the toll-keeper, which the laird resisted on the plea that he had paid on first passing through, and should not pay again. The young girl reminded the laird that it was now another day; that the Sabbath morn had broken upon his return; and, therefore, she expected a fresh payment. But the impracticable laird persisted in his wrong-headed determination not to pay a second toll on one day. It was in vain his friends expostulated and endeavoured to discharge the claim, in order to get home. The unreasonable laird would not permit his friends or his servants to satisfy the demand, and he applied the most violent and unbecoming language and epithets to the girl; all which she received with great meekness, nevertheless with unflinching determination not to unlock the gate without the toll being first paid. The fury of the laird, and the continuation of the noise, at length induced an old woman in her night-dress to peer out of an upper window, with the question of, "Eh! Maggy, what's the gentleman saying?" when the girl wittily replied, "Ah, mither! it's no the gentleman; it's the wine that speaks!" Strange to say, this sobered the laird, who demurely ordered his servant to "gi'e the lassie her will for once, though 'twas hard to pay twice in one day."

As a pendant to the preceding picture of native good sense and moderation, I add the following anecdote:—

During some severe weather, Mr. Mathews had hired a hackney-coach to take him to the theatre where he had to act.

account to Mr. Mathews's personal experience, while on a visit to Sir Walter. The mistake was natural, after so long a lapse of time. The fact has only changed its authority.

Something had happened several times to derange the harness, and the driver, a steady old Scotchman, had been obliged to descend from his box to put it in order; but a third occasion put an end to my husband's patience, besides giving him some alarm lest he should not arrive in time to dress. He looked out of the coach-window, and perceiving the man very deliberately tying some rope together, to effect the necessary repair, somewhat angrily called out that such delays were very provoking; and being unable to induce the man to hasten his operations, he exclaimed, in a sharp tone, "Be pleased to remember how much time I am losing."—"Vary weel, sir," answered the man, quietly and slowly, "and you will be pleased to remember that I'm losing just as much time as yoursel'."

CHAPTER XXXII.

Mr. Mathews's return to London—Letter from him to the Duke of Montrose: embarrassing request—Frequent visits of the Duke and Duchess of Montrose to Mr. Mathews's "At Homes"—Zealous support by Mr. Mathews of the Theatrical Fund—Letter from Mr. Mathews to Mr. Richard Lane: Illegible names—Mr. Mathews's seventh "At Home" at the English Opera-house—Programme of the entertainment—Letter from Dr. Kitchener to Mr. Mathews: the "Cook's Oracle," the "Housekeeper's Ledger."

On Mr. Mathews's return, to prepare for re-opening the English Opera-house, an unexpected and novel intimation embarrassed him exceedingly, and occasioned him to address the Lord Chamberlain privately, in the following letter:—

To His Grace the Duke of Montrose.

My Lord Duke,—On arriving in London for the purpose of completing the arrangements for my new entertainment, I have been thrown into the utmost confusion and alarm by the intelligence which Mr. Arnold has communicated to me, that your Grace has called upon him for a written copy of the whole matter to be spoken by me, in order to receive your Lordship's licence.

Without presuming to enter into the question whether an entertainment delivered wholly by one person can, by any possible construction, be deemed "an entertainment of the stage," I still beg leave most respectfully to state the extreme awkwardness of the position in which I am placed by this requisition.

In all my performances for so many years past, it has ever been customary for the several characters which I have selected to be arranged and strung together in something like the order of a story, by one or two other persons; that is to say, a plan has been laid out, which afforded the opportunity of introducing characters, anecdotes, and incidents which I have intended to delineate; but of these there are hundreds which have never yet been committed to writing, and of which, indeed, I could give no idea on paper. Your Grace has, I believe, more than once honoured my performance with your presence; and your Lordship must, therefore, be aware how utterly impracticable the attempt would be to convey any idea, in writing, of the assumptions of character, the imitations of manner, and other peculiarities, of which it is composed.

These, it is well known, have never been personal, nor in any way

offensive to any individual. On this I have always prided myself; and, when I state, that several of my entertainments have been given by me at Carlton Palace, by His Majesty's express command, before the Royal Family and select parties, it cannot, I conceive, be for a moment supposed that anything like immorality, or politics, or any impropriety, ever has been, or ever could be, attempted by me. These facts, however, I should not urge for a moment, but should cheerfully obey your Lordship's order, were it not for the annoying difficulty, which I have before taken the liberty to mention, and which, I confess, I feel to be insurmountable.

Having stated that I have so frequently had the honour of giving my entertainment privately before His Majesty, I feel assured that your Grace will not consider it improper if I venture to say, that the difficulty to which I have alluded may possibly be overcome, if your Lordship would condescend to hear, rather than read me! and allow me on any evening you may be pleased to appoint, to go through my new entertainment in the presence of your Grace and family, and thus enable you to form a far more accurate judgment of its nature, than could possibly be derived from anything that could be written.

I trust your Lordship will not consider this appeal as in any way improper or intrusive.

I have the honour to be, my Lord Duke, your Grace's most respectful and obedient humble servant,

C. Mathews.

Whatever might have actuated the Duke to express the desire which drew forth Mr. Mathews's appeal, the latter had due weight, and produced the most gratifying result. His Grace not only gave up the point of reading the new matter, but also declined, in the most kind form, the offered recital of it; observing that he had perfect reliance on Mr. Mathews's good taste and feeling, and should no more question it.

Ever after this, the Duke and Duchess of Montrose regularly visited Mr. Mathews's "At Homes;" and, on such occasions, his Grace generally did him the honour to go round to his dressing-room in the course of the evening.

One of the songs, never written down to this day, either by author or singer, was "London at Five in the Morning," to the tune of the dance in "Speed the Plough," which tune Mr. Mathews sung to Charles in the carriage while they posted, who composed words to it as they drove along, which words his father learned from his lips before the end of their journey.

I never, after this occasion, recollect Mr. Mathews's being called upon, on account of his individual novelties, by a Lord Chamberlain.

Ever a zealous supporter of the Theatrical Fund, for the sake

of the less fortunate in the profession, Mr. Mathews invariably overcame his repugnance to a public dinner, and personally contributed to the interests of each anniversary. However inconvenient, or even detrimental to his interest, his presence in London might be, I have known him not only often give up most pleasurable engagements, but on several occasions, pecuniary emolument, in order to add his name and exertions to the general stock. He dreaded the occasion as much as a man could do who loved quiet and air better than a crowd and a heated room; and when an extra task was laid upon him, and he was required to make a speech, he suffered actual illness during the whole day, from anticipation of the night's attempt.

On the present occasion he travelled an enormous journey to serve this institution, and appeared at the anniversary dinner as one of the stewards.

To Richard Lane, Esq.

Ivy Cottage, March 11th, 1826.

My dear Sir,—Many thanks for your kind recollection and fulfilment of your promise. The Hogarth is a gem, an unlooked-for treasure. I have retained one of each of the packets of duplicates and returned the remainder, as you requested; also two from *Ildgfkxl* and his friend *Mzudfg*.* They remain wrapped in the mystery they court, by the pains they take to conceal themselves. We have had numerous conjectures here to-day. Broderip says the nobleman is evidently Lord *Sghfgpxl*—Mrs. Mathews, the Duke of *Pxflu*, and I agree with her.

As to the performer who sent you tickets, we should have given up all hopes of discovering him, if it had not been for his defeating his own scheme by so plainly pointing out his own residence, 34, *S. R. James inmon.* "Oh," said I, "it is *R. W. Ynamn.*"—"Evidently," said Broderip.

Seriously, I am evidently very much indebted to you for your very kind present. Mrs. Mathews joins in compliments to Mrs. Lane.

Very sincerely yours, Charles Mathews.

In March, Mr. Mathews came before the public at the English Opera-house in his seventh "At Home." The following was the announcement:—

MR. MATHEWS'S INVITATIONS.

Part I.—Exordium on Invitations.—Mr. and Mrs. Fingerfit, R.S.V.P.—Mrs. W. Worrit, attached Friend.—Various Ways of delivering Invitations.

* These words are drawings from Mr. Lane's letter, meant as a good-humoured satire upon a careless mode of writing, which he often did playfully, to puzzle those whose letters he could not read. His own hand was remarkably clear.

Song—*Two-penny Post.*

Monday.—Ghost of a Tune.—Invitation to Breakfast with Mr Shakely.—Master Peter, Peter Master.—Nervous Toilette.—Sir Benjamin Blancmange.—Invalid Duet, without harmony.—Friendly Fugues.—Lady Dawdle's Invitation to a Pic-Nic Party to Norwood.—"*Cook's Oracle.*"—Recipe for concocting a Rout.

Song—*Gipsying Excursion and Quadrilles.*

Tuesday.—Invitation to Dinner at Sir Donald Scrupleton's.—Guests—Sir Harry Skelter, a disappointed bird of passage.—America, *Niagara;* Italy, *Vesuvius;* North Pole, *Noses.*—Mr. Popper (Nephew to the celebrated *Major Longbow*).—Sporting Anecdotes.—Staunch Pointer.—Invitation to the King's Theatre.

Song—*Visit to the Italian Opera.*

PART II.

Wednesday.—Mr. Archibald M'Rhomboid.—Robin Crankie.—The late Mr. M'Pherson.—Spanish Decapitation.—Head and *Tale.*

Song—*London at five in the Morning.*

Thursday.—Invitation to dine with a Friend in a Family way.—Mr. Dilberry and the dear little Dilberrys.—Mr. John Rally.—Nursery Ballads and Smoking Chimney.—Dinner.—Brilliant Sonata on the Pianoforte by Miss Jane Dilberry.

Song—(*from Der Freischutz*)—by Master Peter Dilberry.

Friday.—Invitation to a "*Rouge et Noir*" Table.—Harry Ardourly, a Yorkshire Fox Hunter.—Consequences of Gaming; the Gaol, the Mad-house.—Contrast.—Another *mad* Scene.—Invitation to the Hustings.

Song—*General Election.*

Saturday Invitation to join a Civic Aquatic Expedition on the Thames. Finale.

PART III.—A Monopolylogue, to be called

THE CITY BARGE!

Æneas Stirturtle, Purveyor to the Barge, with a cold in his head.
Sir Harry Skelter, endeavouring to see something.
Scully, an Antediluvian Waterman.
Mr. Gibblets, a City Adonis.
Mrs. Georgiana Gritts, a Bone of Contention.
Mr. Sassafras, an Apothecary—Rival to Gibletts.
Popper, the Sporting Calendar.

*** All the above characters by Mr. Mathews.

The Songs will be accompanied on the pianoforte by Mr. J. T. Harris, who will play favourite Rondos between the parts.

According to the plan I have hitherto pursued, I here subjoin a contemporary criticism on this entertainment.

Our old favourite Mathews's irresistible "Invitations" to his "At Home" attracted a large party of guests. Never were actor and audience in better spirits, or more pleased with each other. On no former occasion were the versatile powers of our Proteus more thoroughly proved. We had him in all ages and conditions, doing great justice to each character, from *Methuselah* to *Mathews*, and from *Mathews* to the infant "mewling in his nurse's arms."

Our readers can have no idea of the fun of a pic-nic party till they hear it described by Mathews himself, who attended one by invitation from *Lady Dawdle*. Having lost all their dinner store by the oddest set of accidents, they were not so fortunate as another party, consisting of fourteen members, who each contributed a leg of mutton, without suspecting that others might hit upon the same fare. So that when there were fourteen legs of mutton on the board, a wag proposed that every gentleman should eat his own leg.

Sir Donald Scrupleton is an old Scotch baronet, of a very sceptical character, much inclined to *dooting*, and so indistinct in his utterance, that one intelligible word in six or seven is as much as any reasonable hearer has a right to expect.

The new piece abounds in the *vis comica* as much as any that have preceded it; but a single touch in it distinctly marks the hand of a master, and far exceeds anything that Mathews ever did before. His visit to the gaming-house contains as impressive a lesson of morality as ever was delivered from a pulpit. On that occasion, *Harry Ardourly*, a Yorkshire fox-hunter, for the first time that ever he entered the doors of a gaming-house, had the misfortune to win fifteen hundred pounds at a *Rouge et Noir* table. Success created a passion for the practice, which was indulged to the ruin of the unhappy young man's estate; and his mother and sisters were left penniless and unprotected, when he was consigned, first to a gaol, and finally to a mad-house. In this last abode of misery he fancied himself winning back his lost fortune, and on the imaginary success of a cast, he raved aloud, "I have it!—'tis mine!—I have recovered my estates—my farms—my sisters' portions! Mother, mother, where are you? Receive (fainting as in his mother's arms)—mother, receive your prodigal!" After this picture, it was an effort for Mathews, and for him alone, to force the house to resume its gaiety. "'I never after the longest march had so great a mind for my dinner as I had to cry with him for company. What could be the matter with me, an' please your honour,' quoth the corporal. 'Nothing in the world, Trim,' said my Uncle Toby, blowing his nose; 'but that thou art a good-natured fellow.'"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Mrs. Richard Wilson's parties — Distinguished guests — Letter to Mrs. Mathews—Offer to Mr. Mathews from Mr. Price of an engagement at Drury-lane Theatre—Mr. Mathews at the English Opera-house and in the provinces—Invitation from the Duke of Clarence to Mr. Mathews—Conversation between him and his Royal Highness—Mr. Mathews's "At Home" at the English Opera-house for the eighth season—The "Home Circuit"—Programme—Account of the performance—A journal from Brighton—Singular Visitor — Mr. Mathews's acceptance of an engagement at Drury-lane Theatre — Letter from Mr. Charles Lamb to Mr. Barron Field — Mr. Mathews's appearance at Drury-lane Theatre—Great success of the performance—Mr. Mathews's journey homewards from the north—His mail-coach companions—A damp stranger—John Luckie, Baron Hullock, and Mr. Brougham — Anecdote — Mr. Mathews's extraordinary imitation of children — Mr. Liston hoaxed — Mr. Leigh Hunt's description of Mr. Mathews's powers — Hospitality of Mr. Thomas Hill — The Sydenham Sundays.

At the close of this season Mr. Mathews indulged himself in a few days' holiday in Suffolk, at the house of some very old and warm friends, now, alas! removed, with many such, who would, had they existed, have proved a solace to me in my bereavement. I preserve this brief allusion to a friendship of more than thirty years, as a memorial of the once happy hours passed in my girlish days in the midst of the gaiety so widely spread by Mrs. Richard Wilson's parties, in Lincoln's Inn Fields, where the noblest of the land, the wittiest and wisest, gayest and gravest, the idle and the busy, assembled with one common feeling of enjoyment. There have I seen the fine face of the lamented Sir Samuel Romilly, with his lovely and amiable lady at his side, smiling as if peace was for ever a safe inmate in his bosom. Alas for this remembrance! Lords Erskine and Eldon, and a long list of nobles, headed by Royalty itself, were frequent, and I may say, familiar guests, at Mr. Wilson's table, where all the talents were associated. Dear old Captain Morris, with his songs and singing, and charming society; Sheridan, and other of his noted contemporaries, the youthful Theodore Hook and Horace Twiss (just rising from their teens), stood prominently forward,

full of the buoyancy, wit, and talent which established their respective positions in the high and intellectual society in which they both lived. Out of the many that my "mind's eye" now brings before me, these are among the very few that remain to give assent to the truth of those pleasant hours passed in that most pleasant house.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Biddleston, 12th July, 1826.

General Grosvenor has given me a frank, or I believe I should not have written, as I have not enough to say worth paying for. I need not say how delighted I was at the receipt of dear Charles's letter. It was a god-send upon my arrival here, as, indeed, I was most anxious to hear of him. His letter has cheered me: it is all that is delightful. Charming weather! Young is here—desires love—wishes to know if you got the books he sent. All the family desire love. Percy* is better than ever I saw him since his illness. Mrs. Randolph desires particular remembrance; wishes you were here. Pressed upon all sides to send for you: as I know you won't come, I have made all sorts of excuses; but feel embarrassed, as I cannot give such a one as I should myself allow to be really good under the same circumstances. However, we are all slaves to something, and a dislike to variety is an unhappy specimen. Locomotion is what is called happiness to me; that is, life and spirits. God bless you!

C. Mathews.

The succeeding letter was the beginning of a negotiation with Mr. Mathews to act for a term in the regular drama, at Drury-lane. An allusion is made in it to a second visit to America, which, however, was ultimately set aside, such a step being inconsistent with Mr. Mathews's home views at that period.

London, 15th July, 1826.

My dear Mathews,—I have released Bish from his contract, upon his paying me 2000*l.*, and have taken the theatre at my old terms, 10,600*l.* per year. I can only beg of you to reserve for me a few nights in the next season, in any contract you may make with Arnold. For God's sake, bear me in mind. I feel that it is unnecessary to make anything like terms. *You* shall say what they shall be. You and Liston are my great hopes. A letter from you would influence him: however, do not write it if it be disagreeable to you. I leave London on Friday, twelve o'clock, and Liverpool ten o'clock on Monday. Our American business shall be well digested during my absence. Write me a line in return. Excuse great haste. God bless you!

S. Price.

* Mr. Wilson's only son, named after his godfather, the present Duke of Northumberland, prematurely taken from this world to a better.

In the autumn of this year Mr. Mathews accepted a dramatic engagement for a few weeks at the English Opera-house, in the course of which one of the most genuine farces ever produced upon the English stage* was brought forward, in which Mr. Peake, the author, displayed Mr. Mathews's powers to peculiar advantage in the character of *Trefoil*.

After his engagement at the English Opera-house, Mr. Mathews made a short tour.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Liverpool, Oct. 31st, 1826.

Here I am at the Waterloo; and right glad to be in a comfortable house, for the weather is wretched—heartbreaking.

I spent a very jolly day with Speidell at St. John's College, and proceeded, on Thursday, to Stratford. Dined with Saunders—and sat up all night reading by the kitchen fire (no other in the house) at the Lion, to be ready for a coach that always came at half-past three until Friday morning, when it arrived at five; by which I got to Birmingham only ten minutes before my Manchester coach started, into which I trundled with three *damp strangers*.†

C. MATHEWS.

Hampton Court Palace, Nov. 26, 1826.

The Earl of Erroll is commanded by His Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence to request the favour of Mr. Mathews's company, on Friday evening next, at Bushy House.

Lord Erroll requests the pleasure of Mr. Mathews's company at dinner, on that day, at six o'clock. Lord Erroll will have a bed ready for Mr. Mathews.

After several previous arrangements (and disarrangements) for Mr. Mathews to entertain the Duke of Clarence, the time had really come. He accepted Lord Erroll's invitation, and on the day in question went to Bushy. In the evening he accompanied his noble host to the duke's palace, and performed to a select party there, returning to Lord Erroll's for the night.

On the following morning Mr. Mathews was requested to attend upon the Duke; and, on his arrival, was shown into the room where his Royal Highness and the Duchess had just breakfasted. The latter, with great condescension, said a few words in compliment to the entertainment she had received on

* "Before Breakfast."

† Amongst the eccentric sayings of Mr. Brummel ("Beau Brummel") is recorded, that he ascribed a severe cold, then affecting him, to the casualty of being shown into a room with a damp stranger.

the previous night, and then left the room. The next moment Mr. Mathews's eye was fixed upon a large-sized portrait of Mrs. Jordan, hanging up, I think, over the chimney-piece. The Duke, observing this, said, "I know you have a collection of theatrical portraits, Mr. Mathews, which I shall ask to see some day. I hope you have not one like that?" My husband did not quite understand the question, and his look probably expressed his perplexity, for the Duke added, "I mean so good a likeness. I should be vexed that anybody possessed such a one but myself—a better it is not possible to find, and I should not like anybody else to have as good a one."

Mr. Mathews replied that it was indeed excellent, and that he was not so fortunate as to possess so true a resemblance. The Duke then gazed upon the picture, saying, with emotion and strong emphasis, "She was one of the best of women, Mr. Mathews." My husband felt that the Duke was sincere in his belief: indeed, there was something so affecting in his manner of paying this simple and spontaneous tribute to the memory of the mother of his children, that it brought tears into the eyes of him to whom it was addressed. The Duke, perceiving this, put forth his hand, and pressing that of my husband, added, "You knew her, Mathews; therefore must have known her excellence."

After a short and pensive pause, the Duke diverted the conversation from the interesting subject into which he had been betrayed, to the scene of the previous night; and, after commenting upon what most pleased him, in his characteristically blunt manner said something in reference to his obligations, and not very extensive means to be liberal. This was touching my husband on the tenderest point; and while he hesitated in what becoming manner he could tell one of the royal family that he did not like payment of any kind out of the regular routine of his profession, even for "obliging" him, the Duke put a little case into his hand (not without some embarrassment in his own manner at the awkward position in which it was evident my husband felt himself), and said, "Mathews, I am not rich enough to remunerate such talent as yours, or make a suitable return for your kind exertions of last night, which delighted us all; but I hope you will gratify me by your acceptance of the contents of this little purse, for the purpose of purchasing some small addition to your collection of paintings, in remembrance of me and of the original of that portrait."*

* The case contained a 50*l.* note.

This was so gracefully though simply expressed, that my husband made his bow in acknowledgment, and departed, deeply touched at the feeling evidence of the Duke's recollections of what had been.

In relating this fact I feel unconscious that I am committing an impropriety; for, in my estimation, the King of England lost nothing of the respect felt for him, by the admitted fact that the Prince had loved the mother of his children.

On the 8th of March, the English Opera-house, for the eighth season, presented Mr. Mathews "At Home." This was the announcement:—

HOME CIRCUIT; or, LONDON GLEANINGS.

Part I.—Exordium.—Pecuniary Crisis, Civic Explanation of.—Jack Project.—Schemes.—Delights of Country Acquaintance.—Visit to Fulham.—Project's Plan to make Mr. Mathews's Fortune by a mere

Song—Medley of Melodists.

Gleanings—Mr. Domus: "*Look at Home.*"—Commodore Cosmogony: "*Look Abroad.*"—Mr. Zachary Barnacle: "*Look Everywhere.*"—Monument on Fish-street Hill, Pompey's Pillar.—St. Paul's, St. Peter's.—River Thames, River Nile.—Tower of London, Tower of Pekin.—Coffee House Directory.—Hermitage Hall, Fulham.

Song—Short Stages.

More Gleanings—Ex-Justice, Lawyer Muzzle.—Penal Code.—"Do you know what you are doing?"—Statutes at Large.—Mr. Spinks, Rebus Writer, Ladies' Diary.—Black Eyes and Black Act.—Feline Oculist.—Benefit of Betting.—Legal Liabilities.—Mr. Honeyman and his Honeymoon.—Marriage.—Barnacle's Bewailings: "Losing all our Amusements."—Visit to Theatrical Gallery proposed, previous to which, a Peep at the Auction Mart, and

Royal Exchange—*in a Song.*

Part II.

A Monopolylogue, to introduce the Dead *alive*, entitled Mathews's Dream; or, the Theatrical Gallery!

In which will be exhibited whole-length Portraits of the late

Messrs. Suett,	in *Dicky Gossip.*
Kemble,	in *Penruddock.*
King,	in *Sir Peter Teazle.*
Cooke,	in *Sir Pertinax Macsycophant.*
Incledon,	in *The Storm.*

Cum multis aliis post obit Recollections, depicted from the Life, by Mr. Mathews.—The Scene painted by Mr. Roberts.

PART III.—GLEANINGS CONTINUED.

Leather Lane Parthenon, or Mechanical Athenæum.—Mr. Sandy M'Sillergrip, with his Lecture.—Arts and Sciences made Easy.—Barnacle *redivivus*.—More Lamentations.—Gog and Magog.—Hurdy-gurdies.—Decay of Dancing Bears.—Loss of the Lotteries.—Things that were.

Song—Things that were not.

Fresh Gleanings—Thames Expedition.—Commodore Cosmogony's Colloquies.—Red House, Battersea; Golden House, Bhurtpore.—Batter-sea, Black Sea, Dead Sea, and Red Sea.—Pigeon-shooting: Tiger-shooting.—Vauxhall Hams: Westphalia Hams.—Visit to the Exhibition proposed.—Sketch in *Water* Colours.—Joe Hatch, the Thames Chancellor, Boat Barrister, and Regal Legal Waterman.—Somerset House.

Song—Royal Academy.

Additional Gleanings—Mr. Aspinall and his Man Andrew.—Personification of Fear.—Castellated Mansion.—Alarms and Alarum Bells. Prevention is better than Cure.—Gipsies.—Robberies forestalled.—Mr. Muzzle: more Statutes.—Mr. Spinks: Reiteration of Rebuses.—Compounding Felony.—Real Cockney Gleanings.

Song—Epping Hunt.

Messrs. Cosmogony, Muzzle, Spinks, and Mathews.—Finale.

The Songs will be accompanied on the Pianoforte by Mr. James T. Harris, who will play favourite Rondos between the Parts.

Mr. Mathews, after reaping a rich harvest in foreign countries, places his scenes and adventures of character at home, within the sound of Bow bell, where he finds that, to the acute observer, much remains to be explored. His chief associates are *Commodore Cosmogony*, a "traveller," with as exhaustless a fund of invention as *Major Longbow* himself, and so attached to the rare sights to be met with abroad, that he owns no acquaintance with the Monument, St. Paul's, or the Thames; *Lawyer Muzzle*, a walking digest of the statutes at large, who, for the simplest action, can quote a law which makes it penal; *Mr. Zachary Barnacle*, a pessimist; and *Spinks*, a village tradesman, addicted to the Muses, who retails bad jokes and stale conundrums, to which Mathews contrives, however, by his inimitable manner, to give more effect than the most original wit and humour would have produced in other hands. A butt like this always forms a part of Mathews's *dramatis personæ*. Various other characters are introduced in the course of the adventures, which include a journey to town in one of the "short stages," the various interruptions in which, with the agony of an inside passenger, who has an engagement (military time) to dinner, are described with great humour. A

visit to the Royal Exchange, given with great spirit; a scene at the Auction Mart; a visit to the Royal Academy; and the mysteries, in full description, of the Epping Hunt. One of the best occasional delineations of character is that of *Joe Hatch*, a waterman, who is also termed the Thames Chancellor and Boat Barrister, a fellow (we presume a real portrait, though we have not the good fortune to know the original) who lays down the law of his craft, promotes and allays quarrels, and gratifies his fare with a "long tough yarn" of his own adventures. A *Mr. Aspinall*, who is in constant dread of thieves, and who sends out his servants to any suspicious fellow he sees, with a supply of money or clothing, to prevent his being robbed and murdered, is humorously drawn. Several songs are interspersed in Mr. Mathews's best style of humour. The entertainment winds up with a monopolylogue, called "Mathews's Dream; or, the Theatrical Gallery;" in the course of which he introduces imitations of Suett, Kemble, King, Cooke, Incledon, and other eminent performers now no more.

Mathews's Theatrical Gallery has been a "palpable hit." He has never done anything more ably; it is food for every mouth, and is at once the most agreeable and most finished mode of conveying a personal imitation. Mr. Mathews has herein a double gratification; for, in eliciting the unbounded applause which his performance does, he is only receiving, in a multiplied degree, the admiration of those numerous visitors to the "Real Simon Pure" at Kentish Town, his own residence, in which his genius, industry, and property have erected a monument to their owner's character, that will render it illustrious for ever and ever. We cannot imagine a more gratifying circumstance to any man, than the homage which is nightly paid to Mr. Mathews in this Monopolylogue; and it must be an earnest to him, that, highly as his abilities are rated by every one who saw him, it is an admiration inferior, if possible, to that which is bestowed on the consequence and respectability which his taste has thrown around his profession.

During my husband's absence from town, Mr. Price reiterated his earnest desire to engage him at Drury-lane this season, in a letter addressed to Mr. Mathews's confidential friend and adviser upon all important business, and requesting his influence in favour of such an arrangement. This application led the way to a serious negotiation between the parties, the result of which will hereafter appear.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Brighton, 26th July, 1827.

I send a journal. Wednesday morning, rose at half-past eight; started at half-past nine; wind west, with breezes, cloudy and threatening. Arrived at Croydon at eleven; at half-past, slight rain. Red Hill; baited my horse, but fasted myself. Read Napoleon; counted

six Brighton coaches in the hour I remained there. Arrived at Crawley, half-past three; received by David, a hurdy-gurdy organ, and Pan-pipes, French itinerants, who played under my window all dinner-time, annoying me very much, for which I gave them sixpence. Bad dinner; three mutton chops totally spoiled—fried and over-done—dirty young potatoes. Started at half-past five. T-ee-d at Hickstead, and arrived at half-past nine at Brighton. Here I am, at the "old Villain's." Went into a warm bath; and after listening to the prattle of Russell for two hours, went to bed; rose at eleven; rehearsed my song.

I was quite delighted with "The Rendezvous," which is a real good piece, quite French, and very well put together for our stage, and, moreover, very well acted. I had a capital front seat on a chair in the front boxes, which I enjoyed all in my way till the end of "The Rendezvous," when Mrs. Elliot spied me, and beckoned me to her side box; where I saw the last piece not in my way, for she talked to me all the time.

C. Mathews.

Mr. Mathews used to remark, that odd characters seemed placed purposely in his way, that he might pick them up. It is certain that he saw more oddities than most people. Whether this arose from a fine mental perception of peculiarities, or an aptness to describe what other eyes either altogether overlooked, or thought not of describing; or, whether he was, as he said, favoured in such opportunities, it is certain that he constantly found something to add to his rich stores of character.

Being engaged to a late dinner, Mr. Mathews, in compliance with the demand of his appetite, which had been lately accustomed to an earlier hour, had ordered a mutton chop to be brought up to him one day, at the Old Ship. As he was waiting for it, a "gentleman" was announced by the waiter, who, as usual with such people, seemed delighted at showing up a nuisance,—and immediately made his appearance in the room. He was a perfect stranger; and had the sun not shone brilliantly all that day, or had my husband been advertised to make his bow in public that night, woe would it have been to the doughty stranger who now addressed him with impunity. He was a little, fat, red-faced man, of respectable appearance, with his head frosted over with pomatum and powder, like a twelfth-cake. "*Mr. Mathus*, I presume?" asked the little gentleman, with his hat in his hand, at the same time making a low bow.—"Yes, Sir," mildly answered my husband; "what is your pleasure with me?"—"Why, Sir," chuckled the good-humoured intruder, as he stood gazing somewhat in the fashion of a sight-seer who

has paid for such privilege; "why, Sir—a—a—I have taken, perhaps, a great liberty, which I beg you'll excuse. The fact is —a—a—I never go to a playhouse; but—a—*raily*—a—a—I have heard much of you; and I have even read much about you, Sir. It is said that you are an uncommon character. I am going away this afternoon; and, hearing that you were in Brighton, *raily* I could not resist the *opportoonity* of finding you out before my *departur*, being anxious—a—a—a—to see how you presented yourself to the eye!"

As I have said, Mr. Mathews was in a favourable state of spirits, and, moreover, was amused at the novelty of the style of this *raily* simple and inoffensive person. He therefore determined to humour his visitor, and accordingly said, in answer to his droll address—

"Well, Sir; I hope my appearance is satisfactory?"

"Truly so," replied the little plump man, as he measured him with his eye; "I look upon it, Sir, that you have had more whimsical *adventurs* and odd things happen to you than ever occurred to any other man?"

"Why, yes, Sir," said Mr. Mathews, "odd things do sometimes occur, as you say, Sir."

At this moment the waiter entered with the tray; when Mr. Mathews invited the stranger to sit down, adding, "As you have come to see a strange animal, it is lucky you have found him at feeding-time; will you partake?"

"By no means," bowed the little portly gentleman. "Sir, I will no longer intrude; for *raily, Mr. Mathus,* I have taken a freedom; but I could not resist the *opportoonity* that offered; and all I have to say is, that I have been very much gratified by your benign and generous reception. Sir, your very obedient."

Thus saying, the little corpulent stranger bowed and backed himself out of the room, with much gravity and apparent satisfaction.

About the end of August, Mr. Price prevailed upon my husband to accept the long-proffered engagement, for the beginning of next year, at Drury-lane Theatre. I say prevailed, because the terms offered were, I may say, of so extravagantly liberal a nature, that Mr. Mathews, with his characteristic modesty and conscientious consideration for others, conceived it impossible that such an engagement could be reciprocally beneficial to manager and actor. On the other side, in resigning his "At

Home" season, the sacrifice required great compensation in any other undertaking; and he was unwilling to risk either a severe loss to himself, by accepting moderate terms from Mr. Price, or a similar disadvantage to so generous a person, by consenting to the splendid offer so urgently pressed upon him. However, Mr. Price at last prevailed; and I believe Mr. Mathews's nightly salary exceeded any that had then been given to a comic performer.

After this engagement was finally arranged, my husband was often depressed at the possibility of his friend having made a bad bargain, and as often declared his own conviction that they would be mutually harassed and disappointed. "For," he would say to me, "if I don't bring the money, how can I think of taking such sums out of Price's pocket? It's out of the question. However, he's an obstinate fellow, and I could not refuse him; but we shall both be losers." Mr. Price, notwithstanding, proved himself, as in his general conduct, not only a liberal man, but one of consummate judgment, as the result will show in the present case.

*To Barron Field, Esq.**

Oct. 4th, 1827.

I am not in humour to return a fit reply to your pleasant letter. We are fairly housed at Enfield, and an angel shall not persuade me to wicked London again. We have now six sabbath days in a week for—none! The change has worked on my sister's mind, to make her ill; and I must wait a tedious time before we can hope to enjoy this place in unison. Enjoy it, when she recovers, I know we shall. I see no shadow, but in her illness, for repenting the step! For Mathews—I know my own utter unfitness for such a task.† I am no hand at describing costumes, a great requisite in an account of mannered pictures. I have not the slightest acquaintance with pictorial language even. An imitator of me, or rather pretender to be me, in his Rejected Addresses, has made me minutely describe the dresses of the poissardes at Calais!—I could as soon resolve Euclid. I have no eye for forms and fashions. I substitute analysis, and get rid of the phenomenon by slurring in for its impression. I am sure you must have observed this defect, or peculiarity, in my writings; else the delight would be incalculable in doing such a thing for Mathews, whom I greatly like—and Mrs. Mathews, whom I almost greatlier like. What a feast 'twould be to be sitting at the pictures painting 'em into words; but I could almost

* A very early and much-regarded friend of ours.

† Mr. Lamb had been asked for a catalogue of the gallery of our friend, who justly believed he would write charmingly upon the subject, as he afterwards proved he could.

as soon make words into pictures. I speak this deliberately, and not out of modesty. I pretty well know what I can't do.

My sister's verses are homely, but just what they should be; I send them, not for the poetry, but the good sense and good will of them. I was beginning to transcribe; but Emma is sadly jealous of its getting into more hands, and I won't spoil it in her eyes by divulging it. Come to Enfield and read it. As my poor cousin, the bookbinder, now with God, told me, most sentimentally, that having purchased a picture of fish at a dead man's sale, his heart ached to see how the widow grieved to part with it, being her dear husband's favourite; and he almost apologized for his generosity by saying he could not help telling the widow she was "welcome to come and look at it"—e.g., at his house—"as often as she pleased." There was the germ of generosity in an uneducated mind. He had just reading enough from the backs of books for the "*nec sinit esse feros*"—had he read inside, the same impulse would have led him to give back the two-guinea thing—with a request to see it, now and then, at her house. We are parroted into delicacy.—Thus you have a tale for a Sonnet.

Adieu! with (imagine both) our loves. C. Lamb.

On the last night of this year (1827), Mr. Mathews made his appearance at Drury-lane Theatre in the characters of *Sir Fretful Plagiary* in "The Critic," and *Buskin* in "Killing no Murder." The whole of the day, I remember, he was exceedingly depressed, and no assurances could give him confidence against his inward conviction that the engagement would be a failure as to attraction. "How could it be otherwise?" he would reason: "Two old and hackneyed pieces—novelty might have done something," &c. I confess I also had my misgivings; and at one moment had settled not to go to a box reserved for me; but my fears were overruled by a judicious friend, who accompanied me to the theatre.

On our arrival we were met by crowds coming out from the several doors. What could this mean? what had happened? (for the truth never occurred to me.) My questions were speedily answered by our entrance into the lobby, where a scene of confusion presented itself, from a press for places by those who had improvidently trusted to the average of unlet boxes, and the anxiety of others to get admission to those which they had secured. In short, when we were seated, and commanded a view of the house, we found it crammed in every part!

The result of this night's performance was a source of much comfort, as well as pride, to Mr. Mathews, although such houses could not be expected after the first night. Such a beginning, however, augured a success which might satisfy all Mr. Price's

calculations; but again and again the theatre was filled in the same manner, and the same performances were repeated, with similar effects, successively thirteen nights.

As an instance of candour and generosity, generally considered contrary to the arcanum of management, I must here record that, at the conclusion of only part of the term of the engagement, Mr. Price informed Mr. Mathews that he had then cleared the whole amount of his engagement, with a considerable profit upon it.

Most satisfactory was this result. Indeed, it was altogether creditable to the feelings of both actor and manager.

G. F. Lewis pinxt. W. Greathatch Sc.

MR MATHEWS

As Cadet Roshin, in the "Wags of Windsor"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Mr. Mathews takes a share in the Adelphi Theatre with Mr. Yates—Performances at Brighton with Mr. Yates—Anecdote of Mr. Liston—Letters to Mrs. Mathews: Berkeley Castle: Performances at Cheltenham—Mr. Mathews's dinner miseries—Letters to Mrs. Mathews—Letter from Mr. C. J. Mathews to Mrs. Mathews: Journal of a residence in Italy.

I SHALL not enter into the particulars of an event which was decided upon at this period, but leave my husband's succeeding letter to explain it to the reader.

To Henry B. Gyles, Esq.

Kentish Town, June 17th, 1828.

DEAR GYLLY,—I am delighted indeed to hear you say you are settled, and sincerely hope that you may be in the same mind two years hence. I had acted *Oldskirt* on Saturday night, and, coming home, found your letter with the quotations. Ha! ha! droll enough! Now you will be astonished! Prepare for wonder! You are the first, too; nobody knows it yet but four on earth. Don't look over leaf—don't mention it, now. Will you believe it? You won't. Well, then, I have taken—no, not taken—but it's all as good as done; that is, I shall have it—but nothing settled yet—that is, not signed—but it's all right! I know you will stare more than you have made me stare. I am about to commence manager!—I am to have the Adelphi with Yates! Ha! stare! do! and say, when he, that has so sworn! Yes, he——I cannot enter into particulars, but you must think.

I will come and see you—I will. I have a friend at Wooton, who has asked me. I have often promised Colonel Berkeley, who reminded me last Saturday of it, &c. I will come—indeed I will, this summer.

My wife's love to your wife.

Ever thine, MAT.

Pre-eminently successful and lucrative as Mr. Mathews's engagement at Drury-lane had proved, the size of the stage made acting a serious suffering to him; his lameness having increased excessively, and in proportion to the frequency of performing upon it. Mr. Price offered him a renewal of his late engagement for the

following season, on the same liberal terms; but his share in the Adelphi offering another source of gain, with less exertion, and with less bodily pain, from the contracted sphere of action, he was induced to refuse Mr. Price his future co-operation. When all arrangements were complete regarding the new partnership, Mr. Yates and my husband set forth together on a tour, combining their forces for their mutual profit.

During one of these performances at Brighton, while Mr. Mathews was singing that part of his "Auction Song," where he solicits biddings for a particular "lot," after looking round the house, and making several appeals, and exclaiming "Only three pounds offered—only three," a voice from one of the public boxes, which it was impossible to mistake, cried out "Four!" He turned to the spot, to which every other eye also was directed. Though taken by surprise, he was not, however, thrown off his guard, but bowing smartly *à la Robins*, exclaimed, "Much obliged; yours, Sir." This bidding was made by Mr. Liston, who was seized, as he afterwards declared, with an irresistible desire to put up for a lot, in order to surprise his brother actor, and was confounded after he had done it, and heard the roar of laughter he had caused, and the notice he had drawn upon himself.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Cheltenham, 27th July, 1828.

Arrived here to dinner, and went to the play, where we saw the distinguished amateurs in Henry IV. The Colonel in the *Prince*, the Captain in *Falstaff*, and C. Kemble in *Hotspur*. 'Pon my word, very well; very well indeed—for gentlemen. The Colonel really good.

We are going off to-day to Berkeley Castle, to dine. I am beautifully well.

CHARLES MATHEWS.

A promise of a plain dinner was always a temptation to him; because, being divested of the usual routine of dishes, it would bring him quickly to his great treat of the day, namely, the first pinch of snuff, which he never indulged in until the cheese was removed. Porter was a beverage for which he felt a positive disgust; and it was a favourite joke of Mr. Liston's, whenever they dined together at any house where they had not been in the habit of visiting, to whisper the servants at different periods of the dinner, not only to hand him various side-dishes repeatedly, but to present him with well-frothed glasses of porter or ale; and the contriver so timed these offerings, that the supplies were sure to reach him in the midst of some remarks he was making,

or to the interruption of something interesting or amusing that he was relating or listening to. It was laughable to see the gradual surprise and embarrassment, and ultimate impatience, of the persecuted person at such repeated annoyance, until his eye caught that of his funny tormentor. He then understood the cause of such unwelcome attentions, and his annoyance ceased, as it always did at the detection of any fun in his "little brother," as he, on such occasions, called Mr. Liston; whose high spirits, contrasted with his generally pensive habit of mind, were as exuberant as those of a boy, when "i' the vein," and irresistible as his most successful comedy in public.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Ross, Sunday, September 2nd, 1828.

To any person who had not such a son as we have I should attempt a description of my rapturous delight, last night, at the receipt of that most welcome frank. If I had not been allowed to open it until to-day, I should have been satisfied that all was right. The Hereford folks benefited by it; it put me into tip-top spirits. The first two persons I saw were Rolls and son! This is a sweet place. We only want you here to make us complete. The boat is announced to take us an excursion on the Wye; so be content with hearing all is well. Our receipts since Tuesday, the 21st, have been 200*l.* clear.

The fairy-glass in Charles's letter is more than beautiful—it is exquisite! and if anything were wanting to make our love for him complete, this must rivet it.

C. Mathews.

The letter above alluded to, one of a long series equally interesting, I shall stand excused for inserting. Mr. Coleridge happening to be with me when this letter arrived, I read it to him, and he was so pleased that he begged me to lend it to him shortly after, with other letters previously seen on the same subject, as he fancied he could write a poem from them, and should like to try. In a few days he returned the letters, with a note from himself, of which a mother may be pardoned for being proud.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Dear Mrs. Mathews,—It would be profanation even to alter the position of a word in your dear son's sweet letter in the same language, much more to hazard such substitutes as rhyme and verse might require. But even the genius of a Byron could not be better employed than in translating them into a Greek poem. They are poetry of the best kind—imagination—the power of picturesque arrangement and

playful will in the service of a pure, most affectionate heart. From my own very heart I congratulate you on such a son.

S. T. Colebidge.*

To Mrs. Mathews.

Peroi, July 13th, 1828.

My dearest Mother,—By a turn of fate, I am enjoying myself mightily. Two days after my last letter, I went on a little trip on horseback with the lawyer of Pola, a young German, to visit the neighbouring villages, and I had a most delightful day. From Pola† we went to the Isle of Olives, not very far distant, where we found the Sclavonian peasants celebrating a festival; and, after taking our share in the dancing and merriment for a couple of hours, we continued our journey to Dignano, a little village, only celebrated from the remarkable dress of the peasants. I was very much pleased with them. The women (amongst whom were some very pretty girls) were dressed exactly in the style of the Venetian ladies of old, as we see them in Canaletti's pictures, and had a most surprising effect as they stood in groups about the town. My new-found friend, seeing me so much delighted with these costumes, proposed extending our ride to Peroi, another small village, five miles distant, and one of the wonders of Istria; being a small colony of Greeks (consisting of about sixty families, all peasants) which preserves its original language in the midst of Italians, Istrians, and Sclavonians. I jumped at the proposal, and was amply repaid for my trouble. I never met with anything so elegant and so picturesque as these people: all the girls very handsome, particularly tall and well made, and the men equally so. Their faces are strictly Greek, and their dress quite superb.

I had scarcely entered the place when I determined upon removing there next day, it being only seven miles from Pola; and accordingly, picking out the prettiest house, and that which contained the prettiest girls, I told them my intentions, and gave them reason to expect me. It happened that this family was related to my landlord, Cronopoli, at Pola, who was also a Greek, which gave me great facility in obtaining this favour; for it is considered a great favour, and one never granted to strangers, to take up their abode amongst them.

The day before yesterday I arrived, with all my drawing materials, clothes, &c, and here I am established. On my arrival, I explained that I came to be one of the family, and not to be treated as a gentleman; and accordingly I proceeded with them to the fields to help the cutting of the barley; and, to their great delight, dressed myself in their costume, which I did to my own great delight also. In short, I found myself once more, as among the Neapolitan peasantry, happy

* In the course of Mr. Coleridge's correspondence, published soon after his death, he mentions these letters to a friend with high encomium.

† In Istria.

amidst the innocent simplicity and real enjoyments of unsophisticated nature. The perfect pleasure I felt while dancing, singing, and playing the guitar to these beautiful Greek girls I cannot tell you, enhanced by the feeling that I had already usurped a small nook in their hearts by having thus accommodated myself to their manners. It was quite charming to see them gradually throwing off the reserve of the first day, and beginning to regard me as one of the family. The pride they had in dressing me, and taking me about with them, was great. I had good cause to wear out my legs in dancing with them on the rough stones of the village, for one after another engaged with me till I had gone through the whole string. I then made a sketch of one of them, who had been married about a month, in her bridal dress, a copy of which I gave her.

I am up and out with them in the fields, partaking of their food as well as of their pursuits; the acme of which consists in a couple of hard eggs and a bit of brown bread; not being quite able to accommodate my stomach to their more ordinary fare of bread cooked in oil and vinegar, and dreadfully fat bacon. Fancy me at this moment writing to you, dressed in a white sort of body and petticoat, richly worked in red, blue, and yellow silk; an embroidered handkerchief on my head, and red stockings, bound with red sashes up to the knee, and sheepskin sandals. I wish Lewis were here to make you a sketch of me.

Peroi is a little paradise. I begin quite to love the people, and fancy myself one of them. I am called by them all "*Sukey!*" Is not that a sweet name? As spelt and pronounced in England it is anything but enchanting; but in Greek, as every schoolboy will tell you, it means "my soul," and is a term of the greatest affection.

What would I not give if you could possess, through the means of some beneficent fairy, the glass that I have read of in some child's book, in which the possessor could behold, at every moment of the day, the absent person, and contemplate his occupations and situations. The first thing in the morning you would look in the glass (as you no doubt do as it is), and, instead of beholding yourself in a laced nightcap, with sky-blue bandeau, you would see me (but you must get up at three o'clock to do so) sitting on a stone bench, surrounded by half-a-dozen pretty innocent girls; the one adjusting my head and tying on my worked handkerchief; another lacing my sandals, and all occupied in the decoration of their new-found toy. Near me you would see others, with their beautiful black hair hanging down to their waists, and undergoing the operation of plaiting, till it takes the most beautiful classic form that can be desired. Here and there, at intervals, are three or four fine tall lads, with ample mustachios, trotting to the fields on horseback, with large trusses of straw before them, and saddle-bags hanging on each side, displaying, in their capacious, gaping mouths (not the lads, but the saddle-bags), the store of brown-bread and wine-kegs for their banquet; and a young foal ambling after her aged mother, and now and then seizing her by her swishy tail, and kicking from pure fun and frolic. Then will pass by a little, brown, bare-legged boy, with a

large flock of sheep, with here and there a reverend old ram, decorated with bells and red ribbons; a most picturesque group, making dust enough to smother the whole village.

You will gaze for a moment in admiration at the beauty of the lad; his fine Greek face and large intelligent eyes, dressed only in a sheep-skin, thrown most gracefully over him, and confined with a crimson sash; a pair of sandals and a slouched hat defending his two extremities, and a double pipe of rude form resounding through the woods as he saunters after his family. A short time after, you will see the whole village in motion—girls, boys, old men, and old women, and myself in the midst of the throng, moving forward in procession; some with pitchers on their heads, some with baskets in their hands, to begin the labour of the day. You will hear, if your ears are good enough, the choruses of villagers, very different from the compositions of Bishop, arranged most harmoniously by themselves, and sung most correctly in parts; the melody some day you will hear imitated by me, as copied exactly from themselves. During the interval of these choruses you will probably—but you must listen well—hear a solo, though of somewhat a more sprightly character, and in a more comprehensible language, in a voice not unfamiliar to you; and at the same time you will observe the pleasure without humbug, and the approbation without flattery, expressed upon the smiling countenances of the rest of the party. An hour or two afterwards you, perhaps, will take up the glass again—fancy it a looking-glass, and so you can resume the scrutiny many times through the day without much effort—and you will see the party dispersed in various groups over the landscape, and under the shade of some old trees you will see me lying, with a book in my hand, most probably a Byron or a Moore, in the character of an Arcadian, casting occasional affectionate looks towards my darling peasants at their work, and now and then joined by a girl or two from amongst them, who will sit by my side, and pretend to read my book with me, till called by the rest to their work again; and sometimes you will see them depart—don't be scandalised—with their cheeks slightly coloured, lest their companions should have observed the chaste salute as freely received as given. Then, by about the time my father's step announces his approach to the breakfast-room, while waiting for the arrival of his smoking steak, take a glance at me, sitting as one of my smiling circle, with a hard egg in each hand, a small loaf of whiter bread than the rest (baked on purpose for me, and regarded as a *chef d'œuvre* in its kind), on my knees, and a wooden bowl as white as snow before me, full of wine and water, to afford a tolerably easy passage to my frugal fare, while my companions, with appetites scarcely credible, dispose of bucketful after bucketful of bread, made into soup by the addition of oil and vinegar, till you begin to doubt whether the feast is performed by elephants or peasants. What would Sir John Carr say to see these girls eat? He who thinks the merrythought of a pigeon too much for a woman, would stare to see a bucket of vinegar, bread, and oil disappear between the rosy lips that he had just been kissing, and see the languish-

ing eyes of a lovely girl throwing aside their jetty fringes to seek the bottom of a three-quart pitcher, which, "high poised in air," travels from mouth to mouth, emptied again and again into the elephantine receptacles of these tender maidens, and, like the tower of Pisa, threatening destruction to all around in its fall. The natural consequence of this light repast, added to the heat of an Istrian sun, is a general inclination to sleep, the girls most modestly seeking some shady spot at a distance somewhat remote from the male part of the community. Then, for a couple of hours, you may put down your glass, while we give ourselves up to sweet slumbers; first, however, observing me enjoying my privilege as the pet of the party, of lying on the best bit of green, and pillowing my head upon whichever lap I please: a privilege which even the men of the party seemed to think it quite right I should enjoy.

We'll say now that it is one o'clock. My father has just started for town, to attend an eleven o'clock rehearsal at Drury, and you have just retired to your little boudoir to do a bit of "reading and writing." Presently, after a look at the sketch of me by Lewis, you naturally wish for one more glance at your fairy glass, and see me quietly seated, alone, in my little alcove in my Greek cottage, returned from the fields, and occupied with my pen or pencil.

You now begin to think the whole description almost too romantic to be true. You see a Greek gentleman, in a most picturesque costume, sitting on a settee, under an elegant-shaped arcade, with a pipe in his mouth, as grave as can be desired, occupied in serious pursuits, with a beautiful boy of five years old standing at the table, with a little white embroidered tunic, confined by a crimson sash, a pair of stockings something like those of Scotland, half way up his little legs, a pair of white sheep-skin sandals, and a scarlet cap with a feather in it, carelessly cocked on his little head, cutting bits of paper into moons and stars, with a pair of English scissors. You don't know which to look at: you are in love with the child, and yet you cannot help looking at the gentleman. You can't be deceived. In spite of the dress, the mustachios, and the alcove,—in spite of the smell of tobacco, you still discover the features you are in search of. You look over his shoulder, and you see a letter addressed to his dearest beloved mother, and unthinkingly print a kiss upon the glass which, dimmed by the attempt, hides from you the image you were contemplating; and, as the steam which bathed it gradually clears off again, you fancy you see his eyes wet with the tears of true affection, which, glistening still for a moment, seem to indicate his grief at your deception. But you are not deceived; for, though you cannot see them, believe me, the tears are not a few which, in the midst of all his enjoyments, are sweetly shed at the thought of the affectionate regrets which are ever troubling the bosom of his mother. He sees her at all hours of the day; he sees his father soothing her sorrow and comforting her with the picture of their son's happiness and well-doing, and reminding her of the unabating love for them both which accompanies him wherever he may be. Though dressed as a Greek, his heart is still English; and all his enjoyments

in this enchanting abode are in reference to the delight of talking them over in his own darling cottage, calling to mind the warmth of a southern sun by the side of a coal fire, and finding a pleasure most exquisite in transferring the kisses of his Greek girls to the beloved lips of his mother.

But I have passed the boundary in the twinkling of an eye, and find myself far away from Peroi, and all its romance. The very thought of my own real home has destroyed in a moment the fairy spell of my enchantment, and my marble alcove seems to want a covering of thatch and a weathercock upon it. My little Spiridion looks up in my face, as if he observed an expression upon it different from the one he is accustomed to, and for a moment leaves his moons and stars, as if to be informed of the cause. Would that I could send the little angel flying to you with my letter, and with the power of conveying on his sweet little lips a portion of the pleasure in description that he and I enjoy together. It is a happiness to look in his little innocent face beaming with affection reflected there from my own,—not from my little innocent face, but from the fondness which it manifestly shows towards him. I have made a sketch of the darling pet, which, though it does not do him justice, will convey something of his air.

But I find my journal, which I intended to have served for a week, has not even completed a day. My subject is not half exhausted, so that your glass must be used another time to finish the picture. I will leave you now for a while, as I would not have you take a glass too much; as it is, I fear when you get this long sheet, and have to pay its increased postage, you will fancy you see double, though I hope the pleasure of the draught will, in spite of the consequences, induce you to drink again.

With love to my dear, dear father, ever your affectionate son,

C. Mathews.

CHAPTER XXXV.

The Adelphi Theatre opened by Messrs. Mathews and Yates—Account of the performance—Mr. Mathews in the character of *Caleb Pipkin*—Annoying inaccuracy—His "first real illness"—His love of eccentric characters—Imputed irritability of Mr. Mathews—His good humour—Origin of the "school orators"—An importunate beggar—Impromptu—Mr. Mathews and Mr. Yates "At Home" at the Adelphi, in 1829—Programme of the spring entertainment—Popularity of the performance—Mr. Mathews's provincial tour with Mr. Yates—Letters to Mrs. Mathews: travelling adventures; a fearful accident; providential escape; arrival at Exeter—Trip to Paris—Mr. Mathews's performance there—Return to England—Engagement of the celebrated elephant, Mademoiselle Djek.

On the 29th of September, 1828, the Adelphi Theatre was opened under the new partnership of Messrs. Mathews and Yates to a very elegant audience; Mr. Mathews acting two new characters, written for the occasion. The introductory piece was the production of Mr. Beazley, the well-known architect, and the other was by Mr. Buckstone, the popular actor.

The following account of this first night of an unusually successful season is worth preservation here:—

Messrs. Mathews and Yates—(great names, or, as Pope says, "unspotted names, and memorable long,") have conjointly undertaken the management of this delightful little theatre. The bill of fare is of a very attractive character, consisting of a piece entitled, "*Wanted a Partner*," and a laughable trifle under the name of "*My Absent Son*." The first explains to the audience the circumstances under which Messrs. Mathews and Yates present themselves to their notice, and gives the former an admirable opportunity of putting forth some of his inimitable power of mimicry. Mr. Yates, it seems, left with the whole theatre on his own hands, wants a partner in the concern, who, it is stipulated, is to be no actor. Mathews accordingly presents himself in the different disguises of a Scotchman, a man of fashion, and a composer of advertisements; and at last, by appearing in his own person, effects the object of his visit, and Yates secures a partner. There is much fun about this piece, particularly in Mathews's imitation of Pellegrini, which is the closest and most ludicrous we ever saw. The last piece, as we said before, is laughable. Early, however, in the representation, two or three

determined Michaelmas devotees in the gallery attacked it; and, though Mr. Mathews, acting under the greatest disadvantages, as all will admit who knew his nervous temperament, made some good points in some rather original as well as good situations, yet he was eventually so completely disturbed by the partial annoyance as to quit his character, step to the front of the stage, and thus address the audience:—Ladies and gentlemen, I very much lament that on the first night of my management, I should have occasion to address you. But I do so as much on account of the author as myself. I have known many of our best farces to be literally hooted from the stage on the first night, when they had not been heard out fairly; and yet, on being afterwards represented, they secured their station on the stage.

"If I thought the opinion of the audience was against the performance, I unhesitatingly say that, with all humility, we would bow to it; but hear us out."

The piece then proceeded more quietly; but it had, in reality, an unfair hearing from the interruption of two or three voices.

Mr. Mathews's next new character was *Caleb Pipkin*, in "The May Queen," in which his acting was most particularly humorous.

In "The May Queen,"* observes a contemporary writer, that inimitable actor, Mathews, contrived, as usual, to keep the audience in "roars of laughter" at his versatile humour—a dry humour that we have not seen equalled in our time. His *Caleb Pipkin* is a masterpiece of acting, true to nature. We know of no one at present on the stage, who could at all come near to him in the personification of this character. The song, "The Humours of a Country Fair"† is unique of its kind; it ought to be called "Mathews's Humours;" for, at the present time, none but Mathews could give it as he does. It received, as usual, a hearty encore; but, like a wise man, who studies human nature, and knows that it likes variety, though he gave the same tune, he gave other words when he answered the encore.

It was amongst the most admirable features of my husband's acting, and it was often remarked by critics as an instance of his peculiar delicacy of tact and feeling, that, though he frequently gave most faithful representations of the lowest life and the most vulgar pursuits, he never did so vulgarly; he never revolted the most fastidious of his hearers. In fact, he was never coarse while he imitated coarseness. It was like looking at one of Wilkie's pictures, delineating a scene in low life, where no idea is conveyed that the painter is himself a low man. This is the peculiar attribute of genius, which, take what form it will, never offends.

* Written by Mr. Buckstone.

† Written by C. J. Mathews.

This remark strictly applies to Mr. Mathews's performance of the *Tinker* in "The May Queen;" a man in the commonest grade of life, in a state of half intoxication throughout; the representation of which, nevertheless, was relished by every portion of the audience; while the description of a country fair, faithful in every particular, was, from his "handling" of the subject, made a source of general enjoyment.

The following letter touches upon one of his annoyances:—

To C. T. Harding, Esq.

My dear Sir,—I wish I could persuade you, amongst numerous friends, that I never did live at Highgate, nor is Holly Lodge at Highgate, but in the parish of St. Pancras.* It makes a difference of nearly a day in the delivery of a letter. But for this mistake, you would have had by return an order for my rehearsal to-night. I enclose you an admission for Monday, with pleasure.

Yours truly, C. Mathews.

I enclose my address, unaltered for ten years, and your cover, in order to show you the ceremony a letter undergoes that is directed "Highgate." I would not care, but it happens a hundred times in the year.

These mistakes, in fact, vexed him very much; and with some reason. We frequently waited dinner for people who had sent a timely excuse for non-attendance; but owing to "missent" being found upon the letter, we did not receive it till the next day.

In the beginning of an unusually cold Lent, Mr. Mathews returned from town upon his pony, complaining of a severe chill all over him, and that his chest felt much affected by it. He became feverish, and at last was prevailed upon to send for medical advice.

This was the first time in his life that his voice was seriously injured, or his lungs what he called damaged; and I have since remembered that his health never completely recovered from this attack, although he was restored, as we thought, at the time. He was unable to perform for some days, and remained in the house during the period of his indisposition—a great concession on his part, under every circumstance, and which ought to have warned me that there was a more deeply-seated cause for his confinement than a slight cold. Alas! it was the first outward intimation of the "ills that lurked unseen" in his apparently robust constitution. In a subsequent letter to a friend,

* Holly Lodge, the seat of the Duchess of St. Alban's, and about a hundred yards from Ivy Cottage.

he describes the nature of his sufferings, and truly calls this attack his "first real illness."

With regard to the imputed irritability of Mr. Mathews, I may say that nothing but indisputable proof could convince him of intentional offence, and then he was depressed, not exasperated, after the first surprise. He felt more in sorrow than in anger when any persons deliberately disappointed his expectations, and acted in contradiction to their own professions; but the shock over, irritation ceased. He might be said to live without enmities, though no man was more cheated, ill-used, or injured by those in whom he trusted. Of this he was not always insensible, and he sometimes complained, but never resented. Personal wrongs he overlooked, but he never could bear to see the objects of whom he had conceived a positively bad opinion—not from resentment, but an involuntary shrinking from meeting with a necessarily altered demeanour persons with whom he had been previously cordial and friendly. He had not stern courage enough to look with severity in the face of those of whom he once thought better, and he therefore avoided them. So unconquerable was this infirmity that when accident threw him unexpectedly in contact with a person of this kind, he had seldom the firmness to refuse, if claimed, the recognition which his sense of their unworthiness prompted him to withhold; and he never felt lasting resentment but to the actually unfeeling. He never could endure to keep discharged servants about him after their going was determined upon, and would rather suffer any sacrifice of money or convenience.

With respect to servants he was altogether very peculiar in his feelings. He was extremely timid of a new comer, and when I expected men or women (strangers) in the house, it was always required that he should see them by some contrivance, without their being aware of his scrutiny, before I concluded to receive their services. He would then say, "Ah, I like that face," or, "I don't like that man; I shall feel uncomfortable to ask so fine a gentleman to do anything for me;" or, "I shall be afraid to ask that sullen fellow for what I want."

He always took a liking to any one that seemed what is called a character; simplicity of manners was a sure passport to his good graces, and I often admitted and retained very stupid and troublesome people, in consequence of his dislike to what he termed fine servants. I have known him in some moods refuse to dine at a friend's house, where he was very intimate, because

he could not bear to encounter on that day the high-bred servant who waited behind his chair.

On the plea of liking characters about him, he kept a man for a long time, in the quality of dresser at the theatre, whose self-importance was his best recommendation. He unconsciously amused, though he as often teased his master by his peculiar manner. Like all blockheads, his gravity was profound; he was fond of "adding weight to trifles" when he could; and all this was very diverting to his employer when no anxiety was likely to be touched upon. Above all, he loved a "misery;" would rather than not have a grievance to relate; his face was doleful and the expressive "title to a tragic volume." His master christened him *Batt Owlett*, from his love of the dismals, which were in general elicited by the most trivial causes. For example:—One night, while my husband was under the most intense anxiety about the state of Charles's health (who was then extremely ill in Italy), and painfully alive to every look or word that might seem to relate to the sufferer, he went to perform at the Adelphi, in "The May Queen," with spirits unusually depressed; "Batt" met him at the door of his dressing-room, with face elongated and eyes cast down, and addressed him in a hollow impressive tone with, "I'm sorry to say, sir, that I have some very unpleasant news to communicate to you!" "Good God!" exclaimed his master, sinking upon a chair, "tell me at once; don't keep me in suspense." "Well then, sir, I'm sorry to say—I can't find your tinker's hat anywhere!" The next night he met his master with less of misery, but with a brow which meant suspicion in its worst form; and Mr. Mathews was then saluted by "Batt:" "Sir, I have something very extraordinary to tell you." "Well?" "You will be surprised to hear, sir, that by a very strange coin*ci*dence I have found your tinker's hat!"

The predecessor of this "gentleman" (as he always styled himself) was a person with a perpetual cough (a sound Mr. Mathews held in the greatest horror), yet, because the "Patch was kind," he could not bear to dismiss him. In fact, it required a dependent to commit some flagrant act of insolence or dishonesty to incur his serious displeasure. In all cases where any subordinates were determined to attach their persons and dis-services to him, he had not resolution to shake them off in the ordinary way. Such was his nature, "Fine by defect and amiably weak."

With regard to temper, Mr. Mathews's characteristic irritability has been so often spoken of, that persons knowing him only by report must have set him down as one of those of whom everybody had reason to be afraid. This was a mistake. Good-nature was the prominent feature not only of his disposition but behaviour; as a proof, all those who partook of that quality understood how to meet his peculiarities and nice feelings, and found no difficulty in his society. But he felt so acutely every absence of propriety and tact, in natures coarser than his own, that he wanted presence of mind to hide the immediate effects of such discoveries, and winced under the wounds which his better taste and feeling received. I never heard a really good-tempered person—a good-natured person, I ought to say, for the terms differ materially—who ever accused Mr. Mathews of being otherwise.

He seldom expressed irritation but his unintentional drollery convulsed all present with laughter, which sometimes added to his vexation, but more frequently restored him to good humour, when I explained to him the ludicrous sense into which his phrases were capable of being turned. He would then join in the laugh, and adopt my view of them, and not unfrequently have they been turned to account professionally. For instance, the "School Orators" arose out of one of his fits of impatience, caused by the reiterated invitations of a gentleman to attend the speech-days at his boys' school—a bore which annoyed him excessively, and which one day induced him to describe such a scene to me by standing up and giving a specimen of the boys of various ages speaking their several speeches. At this I laughed so immoderately that gradually his severity of feeling relaxed, and he good-humouredly enlarged upon the theme, which I declared he should present to the public. I mentioned this to Charles, who put together some verses (for a song) as a vehicle for his father's characteristic imitations of the boys' speeches, and which had as great an effect upon the stage as they had produced upon myself. Indeed, he generally at these moments made very happy hits. I remember once when we were at Epsom races, sitting in the carriage on the course, a very importunate and revolting-looking cripple, to whom we had the day before given money, assailed my husband while he was earnestly engaged in conversation with a gentleman who had entered the carriage for a few moments. The importunity of the beggar was not to be weakened by the assurance that "we had nothing for him," and that we had relieved him "yester-

day." It was unavailing all, and Mr. Mathews, full of anxiety to finish what he had to say to the person in the carriage before the next race began, and finding his persecutor determined to continue his clamorous interruption, was now worked up to the highest pitch of exasperation. Finding the tiresome intruder begin again to renew his solicitation, my husband, in a transport of anger, suddenly dragged up the *jalousie* in order to shut out the nuisance, and, as the man at this moment once more adjured him to "Pity the poor lame!" he was in turn desired, in tones faithfully resembling his own, to "Pity the poor blind!" Even the beggar laughed, who was shrewd enough to perceive the joke.

He had always great presence of mind in these cases. I remember, amongst many impromptus of the kind, one night in Liverpool, while performing at his table, a tipsy and riotous sailor in the gallery interrupted and annoyed him all the first part of the evening with his remarks and grumblings at the style of amusement, which of course he could neither understand nor relish. The audience were fretted, and the general enjoyment upset. In one part of the entertainment Mr. Mathews had to represent an astronomer lecturing on the heavenly bodies for the instruction of a pupil, and while holding up a telescope he had to say—"There, that's Jupiter, and that's Venus;" his persecutor, quite tired of this, again interrupted him with some coarse remark in his gruffest tones. Mr. Mathews, who still kept the telescope to his eye, turned it immediately towards the spot where his pest was seated, and, as if in continuation of his instructions, added, "and that's the Great Bear."

In the spring of the year 1829 Mr. Mathews, in conjunction with Mr. Yates, performed his first entertainment at the Adelphi. The whole of the table parts were, as usual, by himself; but he was relieved by Mr. Yates in the dramatic acts, who undertook that series of rapid change of dress and character, originally introduced and made so popular by Mr. Mathews, whose increasing lameness rendered such locomotion most painful to him. I here introduce the announcement of this entertainment.

ADELPHI THEATRE.

The public is respectfully informed that Messrs. Mathews and Yates will conjointly be "At Home," and deliver their annual Spring Entertainment, on Thursday, April 30th, and Saturday, May 2nd, 1829.

The evening's amusements to commence with Mr. Mathews's new Lecture, in two parts, on peculiarities and manners, entitled the

SPRING MEETING.*

PART THE FIRST.

Exordium.—All Abroad for a Home.—Thoughts foreign to the matter.—Resigning sway for want of a subject.—Legitimate by special desire.—Lost in space.—Advice gratis.—Hint for a New Company.—Never *really at home* before.—Propriety of becoming a Proprietor.—Embarkation in the Adelphi.—Trip proposed.—Sporting Calendar.—Chapter of Entertainments.

Song—*Spring Meetings.*

Travelling Companions.—Introductions.—Doctor Callender, Physician or Musician, and Optician, Magister Coquorum and Travelling Oracle, Director of Wills and Regulator of Powers, Inventor of Tewahdiddle, Wow-wow Sauce, and Dog-sup Wiggy's Way.—Mr. Rattle, Auto-biographer in Embryo.—Reminiscence Writer and Recollector that will be.—Humanity Stubbs, always saying one thing and never meaning another.—Starting from Bumpus's.—Tale of a Bull.—The Doctor and the Hounds.—Hunger and Hydrophobia.—Bark both ways.—Provisional Theatre.—White Hart.—Bob Merrington.—Theatrical Landlord and Actor of *taste*—Baddely's Twelfth Cake to wit.—Long Debates and no News.

Song—*London Newspapers.*

Caution to Cooks.—Oh, the D—l! well, I never.—Dinner in dubio.—Poached Eggs and Peristaltic Persuaders.—Journey resumed.—Trip by Steam.—Kettle *versus* Cattle.—Turnpike Adventure.—Mr. Mobbit on his legs.—Patriotic Oration.—Rumfords and Registers.—A *grate* difference.—Steam at a stand-still.—Passengers be Wallsend-ed.

Song—*Doncaster Races.*

At the end of the First Part Mr. Yates will deliver a *vivâ voce* Report, never before reported, of the unprecedented case of Breach of Promise of Marriage, Fladdigan *versus* Bathershau, as tried the first sittings of the present Home Circuit, to wit before Lord Chief Justice Punbury, elucidatory of

Love among the Lawyers, or Courting in Court.

Parties to the suit—"It is the cause! it is the cause!"

Mrs. Judith Fladdigan,—a *melting* Butter-woman, of long *stand*ing in the market-place, Dublin, Venus of the *Pats*, a fresh victim to Barney's soft impressions,—*Plaintiff.*

Mr. Barney Bathershau,—a Green Grocer of St. Stephen's Green, lately transplanted from the Groves of Blarney, "more honoured in the *Breach* than the observance" of his promise,—*Defendant.*

Counsel—"Brief let me be."

For the Prosecution.—Mr. Philip O'Blossom, the *crim. con.* Cicero,

* By Mr. Moncrief.

with an indignant *Philippic* against the *Cupidity* of the defendant.—Specially retained.

For the Defence.—Mr. Dennis Demosthenes O'Daisy, "making the worst appear the better reason," with the *common plea* of palliation to the plaintiff's declaration.

Witness—"Bear witness, gentlemen."

Mr. Patrick Shane,—an impartial witness subpœnaed by the *partial* party, deeply wrapped up in the importance of his own evidence and a rug cloak.

Judge and Jury—"Now on to judgment."

On the Bench behind the Bar.—Mr. Chief-Justice Punbury labouring to prove Justice a *jest is.* On the benches before it an unlimited Jury. The whole put on the Roll and brought into action by Mr. Yates.

PART THE SECOND OF

MR. MATHEWS'S SPRING MEETING.

Newmarket.—Walking over the Course.—A Stable Story.—Stubbs's Tale of a Tail, or re*tailing* extraordinary.—Return to London.—Road-side Adventure.—Mr. Moritz, the jilted German; or, Sentiment in despair: a killing story.—"Werter and Whilemina."—Trip to Woolwich.—Patrick and the Peas; or, Irish Notions of Marrowfats.

Song—*The Ship Launch.*

A Melancholy Story.—Crooked Billeting.—The Inn out.—What *have* you got?—The Scotch Lady redivivus; "Should auld acquaintance be forgot;" anither little anecdote; a Kirk Story, "fifthly, my brethren;" a Friend from the North.—New Mail-coach Adventure.—Company up or down.—A Luckie Story.—A Passenger too many.

Song—*Lord Mayor's Show.*

The Ship Inn.—Rattle and the Chambermaid.—Making Mems for Memoirs.—Love for Publication.—Cupid in a Chapter.—Concerting measures to encourage harmony.

Song—*The Country Concert.*

Arranged by Mr. John Barnett, from the author's selection.

With additional orchestra expressly for this occasion, all playing at sight. Leader, Mr. Mathews.—First fiddle, Mr. Wood.—Tenor, Mr. Boardman, from Bristol.—Double bass, Mr. Size.—Flute, Mr. Hand-aside.—Grand Finale.

To conclude with, for the first time, an entirely new grand pantomimical monopolylogue, with an entirely new scene, new music, properties, tricks, dresses, and decorations, which have been several hours in preparation, founded on an undeciphered legend never before made public, entitled,

Harlequin and Mr. Jenkins; or, Pantomime in the Parlour.

First and last scene.—Interior of Jenkins' Folly, the enchanting residence of Mr. Jenkins, with a beautifully romantic parlour-window view of the street and neighbouring houses—magical appearance of the gas-lights, and mysterious rising of the moon.

Mr. Jenkins,—proprietor of Jenkins' Folly, a private Pantaloon and an amateur conjuror, formerly in the tea and China trade, projecting a pantomime, and practising the Ombres Chinoises for his own amusement,—Mr. Yates.

Miss Rosetta Zephyrina Jenkins,—his daughter, heiress of Jenkins' Folly, and Columbine of the China closet, concocting crackers and fizgigs *à la Hengler*, amusing her leisure hours with patchwork and Mr. Harley Quin,—Mr. Yates.

Mr. Harley Quin,—a young Bologna caper merchant and colourman of Wandsworth, up to a trick or two,—Mr. Yates.

Mrs. Pantalina,—Mr. Yates.

Monsieur Frogueville Parisian Pierrotquier,—inhabitant of the mystic jar, wishing to enchant Mrs. Pantalina,—Mr. Yates.

Molly Thrulliblubber,—from the lower regions, a *fat*uous being transformed into a mountain of flesh, cook to Mr. Jenkins, and professor of the culinary mysteries,—Mr. Yates.

Joe Merriman,—formerly imp of the ring, slave of the knife-board, and footman to Mr. Jenkins,—Mr. Yates.

Ted Trot-ter-dog,—guardian spirit of the stars, nightly protector of the Jenkins dynasty, and parish watchman, from Donnybrook, victim in the fatal combustion of the China closet,—Mr. Yates.

To conclude with a grand blow up, intended for the eruption of Mount Vesuvius.

The present year's entertainment was one of the most popular of the series.

At the close of a most prosperous "At Home" at the Adelphi, Mr. Mathews made a short professional tour in company with Mr. Yates.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Plymouth, July 20th, 1829.

Two days of pouring rain, head of the carriage up! very wretched fires at night. I always meet with adventures; but certainly we have met with the most singular in the annals of posting. Our post-boy lost his way on Saturday morning, and drove literally upon a wild plain, in some parts of which no tracks of wheels could be seen, and no carriage had ever been before. At last, with our tremendous heavy carriage, we stuck fast; and if we had not all simultaneously called "Stop," and jumped off, we must have been upset. My mind had misgiven me for some time that we were not in a turnpike road, I mean before we came to turf; but, after a few damns from us, the rascal confessed that he had never driven the road before, and had only gone to his place

on Thursday night. He was too proud to ask his way, and there we were stuck fast! We had to walk in a swamp, and at the moment we alighted a most desperate shower came on. It was like a waterspout. The circumstance of the landlord sending a boy ignorant of the road, and his undertaking the task, made it so provoking, that no temper could endure it with coolness. The original stage was only seven miles, and we were two hours and a half performing our route! How many miles we made of it, Heaven knows. A trace snapped in two in an effort to extricate the carriage, lightened as it was by our leaving it; and if we had not luckily had a remarkably long strap that fastened the seat behind, we could not have got on at all. However, we did find the turnpike road at last, and our accident was only food for laughter afterwards; not one of us caught cold, though no one so subject as Yates. His escape is wonderful; for he was drenched, and up to his knees in white clay, running after shepherds to inquire our way out. Yesterday repaid us for all: not one shower, and we travelled through fifty miles of garden, magnificent, rich, beautifully variegated scenery, arriving safe, sound, and well. To-day gives promise of fine settled weather—not a cloud—and *I* acknowledge it to be warm. Dr. Taylor and his wife surprised me by writing me a note to call upon them. He has changed air for his health, but looks very poorly. We have got a snug lodging (no easy affair at this time), and all is right.

C. Mathews.

Mr. Mathews's next letter gives an account of a still greater disaster—indeed, a fearful accident.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Plymouth, July 23rd, 1829.

I have been basking in the sun to-day. I hope you have the weather as fine as we have had. I have not seen such a day for years. We have been on board a hoy belonging to the superintendent of the Victualling-office, whence I write. I am perfectly well. I should not probably have written to-day, if I had not seen a Plymouth paper, in which they have recorded one of my extraordinary escapes. I feared it might be copied into a London paper, and you would be needlessly alarmed. The fact is as they have mentioned, excepting for "an hour" read ten minutes, as I had just finished the concert song, and was bowing to the audience, when the roller of the drop fell on my head and perfectly stunned me. I was certainly insensible for some time; three medical men were on the spot before I was removed from the place where I fell, and one of them instantly bled me, during which time I recovered.

C. Mathews.

The following is the paragraph alluded to by Mr. Mathews:—

Accident to Mr. Mathews, the Comedian.—A letter from Plymouth, 21st July, says: "Messrs. Mathews and Yates arrived yesterday, and

commenced their performances last night to a brilliant, crowded, and highly fashionable audience. Of course Mathews was 'At Home,' but in that part of his Home called 'Spring Meeting' the curtain unexpectedly fell and struck him on the head, which rendered him insensible for an hour and a half! Medical aid was immediately procured, and he was bled, by which means his visit to his 'long home' was fortunately (for us) protracted. This inimitable comedian and excellent man is so far recovered as to resume his performances to-night."

To Mrs. Mathews.

Plymouth, July 25th, 1829.

As I anticipated, the London papers have heard of my accident, the *Courier* making it out that I lay an hour and a half insensible. The accident, at all events, has not left a trace behind, excepting in the arm in which I was bled. I am in every respect well, as I always am at, on, or near the sea. Dr. Taylor positively agrees with me that mine is not a cough. It is only phlegm, and of no consequence at all; even of that I am much better.*

We shall finish about the 17th of August, and I shall be ready, allowing for nearly three days' journey to London and a short time at home. I should say, I can start for Paris on the 23rd. From the moment of my recovery I only thought of my most providential escape; for the blow I received, one would suppose, would have killed an ox. The next day I was no worse, excepting a bump and a slight cut in my head. I have now perfectly recovered—never better. The accident was thus occasioned: the man who was at the drop in the flies, waiting the signal to let it fall, prepared, but the windlass broke, and the curtain therefore came down with a run.

C. Mathews.

"Beautiful weather!" Summer unclouded. This is only the third door on the right hand from Paradise.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Exeter, August 12th, 1829.

We have returned here for the assizes, and play three nights this week. Two houses out of three will have all the fashion of town and country. Lady Morley was determined to make up for breaking our chair by introducing me to about fifty of her acquaintances, on the Grand Stand at the races. Out of this grew a pressing invitation from Mr. Bulteel, who was at our house with Lord Auckland and his sisters. I went there on Saturday, and stayed till Monday.

I am remarkably well, but very home sick.

C. Mathews.

* It will by these affections be seen that his "cold" was not conquered, and that he still retained in a moderated degree the disorder which exhibited itself, for the first time, on the Ash Wednesday of the present year.

Late in August Charles travelled from Italy, in order to spend a few weeks with us; and after a few days' stay with me at the Cottage, I proceeded to join his father at Boulogne, who was announced, jointly with Mr. Yates, to perform there. They carried their design into execution with great success, and afterwards we all proceeded together to Paris. There the same result followed their performance that had attended it everywhere else, the theatre being fairly divided between the natives and the resident English.

From the first moment I saw the comedians of France, I always thought my husband's style of acting peculiarly French, and I often remarked of Potier, in the year 1821, how much he reminded me, in eccentric old men, of Mr. Mathews in the same line of character. In this case no imitation could have occasioned the resemblance, for Mr. Mathews had never seen Potier or France until the year 1818, when he had ceased to be a regular actor in the drama.

At the close of this engagement, the partners repeated their performance at Boulogne, previously to their return to England for the re-opening of the Adelphi Theatre. Mr. Yates having gained his partner's slow leave, engaged the celebrated acting elephant (Mademoiselle Djek) for the ensuing opening; and, fortunately as it turned out, for the success of that part of the season, when another female actress of great popularity made a strong opposition to the minors—Mademoiselle Djek and Miss Fanny Kemble shared the town between them—each the greatest in her line.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Re-opening of the Adelphi Theatre—Mr. Mathews's Comic Annual for 1830—Address on the close of the performance at the Adelphi—Arrival from Italy of Mr. Mathews's son—Severe illness of the latter—Mr. Mathews's fondness for birds and other animals—The little bantam—Letter to the Rev. T. Speidell—Letter to Mrs. Mathews—Letter to Mr. Mathews from the late Mr. Godwin—Study for his last novel of "Cloudesly"—Power of destroying personal identity—Wonderful instance of this in Mr. Mathews—Letter to the Rev. T. Speidell—"Comic Annual" for 1831 at the Adelphi Theatre—Performances of Mr. Mathews and Mr. Yates—Charles Mathews, Junior, and Carlo Nanini—Illness of the latter: his death—Effect of this event on Mr. Mathews described in letters to Mrs. Mathews.

On the 26th of April, 1830, the Adelphi Theatre was re-opened. The following is the bill of the entertainment, in which Mr. Yates this season took no part:—

THEATRE ROYAL, ADELPHI.

The public is most respectfully informed, that on Monday next, April 26th, 1830,

MR. MATHEWS WILL BE "AT HOME,"

And have the honour to present an entirely new Entertainment, in three parts, called

MATHEWS'S COMIC ANNUAL FOR 1830.*

With humorous cuts and other embellishments.

To be published April 26th (Boards), Adelphi, Strand (packed in Boxes) Four Shillings.

PART FIRST.

Chapter 1*st.*—Reasons for undertaking the Editorship.—Parting with Partner.—Reviewers.—Mrs. Neverend.

Chapter 2*nd.*—Mr. John Downright Shearman, retired master tailor.—Monsr. Vindrin.—Mike Earwig, a whispering waiter.—British Justice.—Police Office.—A Skip.

Song—*Zoological Gardens.*

* By R. B. Peake, Esq

Chapter 3*rd.*—Embellishment, Portrait of Mr. Sadjolly, a hale Valetudinarian.—His sons, Master Dicky Sadjolly and Master Jeremiah Crackthorpe Sadjolly.—Youthful Rivalry.—Turn over a New Leaf, &c.

Chapter 4*th.*—Mr. Shakeley.—Nerves.

Song—*The Cork-cutters' Festival.*

Trip to Scotland.—The Rev. Mr. Muckledrawl.—Saunders, a Caledonian Carpenter.—Working to Music.—Whistling.—Second Embellishment, Mr. Dispepys.—Double-bedded Room.—Living Nightmare.

PART SECOND.

Chapter 1*st.*—Embellishment, Mr. Lavolta.—Habitual Risibility.—Mr. Sadjolly's Visit to London.—Affection of the Spine.—French Housemaid.—Brushing up a Tongue.—Visit to Mr. Polish, the dentist.—The two Boys' Teeth.—Mr. Lavolta with a laughable Toothache.—Mr. Polish's relaxation.—German Air, never heard in this country.

Song—*Harmonic Dentist.*

Chapter 2*nd.*—Monsieur Vindrin.—Lost Snuff-box.—*Les petites Allouettes.*—French sense of Honour.

Chapter 3*rd.*—Lieutenant M'Craw.—West Indies.—Honourable Kingston Native and Creole Assembly.—Digression.

Song—*Irish Berrin.*

Chapter 4*th.*—Hic jacet.—Cook's Voyages.—Mr. Dispepsy's *encore.*—The Herefordshire Prize Ox, 4684 lbs. 10 oz.—Raffle.—How to win a great loss.—Mrs. Neverend's last words.

Song—*Vauxhall Gardens.*

Mr. Mathews's reading and introduction to the Afterpiece.

FINALE.

Mr. Sadjolly.—Mr. Lavolta.—The Boys.—Vindrin.—Earwig.—Mr. Mathews.

PART THIRD.

Will be presented as a Pictorial Embellishment to the Comic Annual,

A Monopolylogue to be called THE LONE HOUSE.

Dramatis personæ, enacted by Mr. Mathews.

Mrs. Dora Dunbird,—Deaf Housekeeper.

Andrew,—Butler, groom, gardener, and cook to Sir Chevy Melton, when the respective servants are absent.

Jeremiah Abershaw, Esq.—Prior to his elevation.

John Sheppard, Esq.—Antecedent to his suspension.

Dramatis personæ, represented by Andrew.

Ap Leeks,—Sir Chevy Melton's Welsh gardener.

Bechamel,—his French Cook.

Captain Grapnell, R.N.—Friend of Sir Chevy Melton.

&c. &c. &c.

At the close of his performances at the Adelphi Theatre this season, Mr. Mathews addressed his audience in nearly the following terms:—

Ladies and Gentlemen,—It is customary on such occasions as the present to acknowledge the patronage which has been bestowed upon the efforts of the performers; but I really feel myself so much exhausted that I can say little beyond the simple word "farewell." At a time when, from what causes I will not pretend to determine, there is not so strong a disposition to encourage theatrical entertainments as formerly existed—at a time, too, when the market is overstocked with foreign produce, I feel much gratified, and, indeed, I may say, even more astonished than gratified, that so humble an article of home manufacture as that which I have been able to offer you, should have met with such distinguished success. I wish it to be understood, that in the allusion which I have just made, I speak not for myself, inasmuch as this is the period when, probably, under any circumstances, my season would have closed; but I speak in behalf of those who have large and expensive establishments to maintain. This is the thirteenth season in which I have had the honour of appearing single-handed before you. The entertainment which has been offered you this evening has been repeated forty nights. It is usual on such a night as this to return thanks in the name of the whole company. Here we are unanimous; and, in the name of all whom I may represent, I respectfully bid you "farewell."

Mr. Mathews then retired amidst enthusiastic applause. The house was quite full.

The Adelphi having once more closed, my husband again journeyed to the provinces.

To H. B. Gyles, Esq.

London, Dec. 15th, 1830.

Dear Gyles,—I hereby acknowledge the receipt of your letter, per threepenny to-day. You have been a long while about it, and hardly deserve an answer; therefore I won't be put off, so I won't. I will have the smallest bantams in the world. Where is the one we met one day in Ross-market.

I was on the point of writing to you, if I had not heard, to tell you of the arrival of our poor dear Charley. You may fancy his sufferings, when I tell you that at the time we heard from him at your house in August he had been then confined two months, and lost the use of his limbs entirely in that month, from which time he has not been able to lift his hand to his head, walk even on crutches, or turn himself in bed. Do you not marvel? Do you not laud him for unheard-of resolution in returning? "Will after ages believe it!" His leeches (well may they be so termed in old plays) at Venice, condemned him to four months more solitary confinement; told him if he moved it would be certain

death. Well, said he, I will rather die on the road, with the chance of seeing my parents and beloved home once more. He bought a carriage, ordered his Italian servant to put him in, as he would have ordered his own trunk, and in that helpless, forlorn, wretched state, undertook a journey of one thousand four hundred miles, which he accomplished in nineteen days; the post takes fourteen or fifteen.* It was the most afflicting sight I ever experienced, to see him lifted from the carriage. The only evidence of the body being animated was the sound of his dear voice, offering up thanksgivings to God for having granted him strength to reach home. He is already somewhat better, and all the doctors promise a perfect recovery; but do not promise it under some four or five months.

Love to your wife, and be assured of the unalterable friendship of

MAT.

This dreadful visitation of Charles's was produced by a fever, some said malaria. On his return home, a consultation took place, and Doctors Paris and Johnston agreed in their opinion upon the occasion, that the youth, good constitution, and excellent habits of the patient would restore him, without the aid of medicine; and so it proved. He was a cripple, however, full twelve months, and an acute sufferer the greater part of the time.

But to return to the paragraph of the foregoing letter, in which Mr. Mathews says, "I *will* have the smallest bantams in the world." It was always diverting to see the craving he had for collecting animals and birds, and, indeed, every living thing. He had so many pets in this way, that it seemed extraordinary how he found time to notice all. He generally had two piping bullfinches, always a parrot, sometimes a cockatoo, often a gull, and a lark; he had also gold and silver fish, a magpie, a tortoise, two dormice, a tame hawk, and that rare talking bird, a Mino. This last he had taught to speak. Then a variety of dogs, cats, rabbits, &c., too many to enumerate. All these contributed in turn to interest and employ his attention; but he loved bantams, and "would," as he said, "have the smallest in the world." One was at last procured, the most perfect little creature I ever saw —the most beautiful that could be imagined. The first morning of his arrival he was associated with others of the same class, in a Lilliputian spot laid out for them apart from the common herd of fowls; but he contrived to give his companions the slip the very first day, and whilst at breakfast in a room leading into a conservatory, we were surprised to see this little strutting fellow

* He travelled in a carriage in which a bed was constructed.

come in and tamely walk about the room, as if a thing of custom with it. This delighted my husband, and he showed his delight like a child; he strewed crumbs and fed his little favourite, who retired voluntarily when satisfied, and we saw no more of him that day. The next morning at the same period, to our increased surprise, our little visitor again marched in and received his reward, allowing us all to take him up in turn, and feeling perfect confidence. This conduct actually had the effect of making my husband rise every morning as soon as the little curiosity crowed the breakfast hour, when he was sure to be true to time. It really was curious to observe the tiny being perform this duty morning after morning, and live, as we ascertained, the rest of his time in total reserve with his own species, picking up his share of their provision, but in a manner apart from them, and retiring to roost near the house in a branch of ivy, nestling himself in its thickness, instead of perching like a fowl.

One morning we were as usual expecting "Count Boruwlaski," as we had called him from his diminutive size (he was a short period after his accustomed time); my husband was just going to look after his little guest, when lo! in he marched bleeding, with one wing nearly off and dragging upon the ground. He seemed to say, I have escaped from the murderer to come and die amongst my friends. The poor little creature had evidently been attacked in his roosting-place by a rat, and escaped with this severe hurt.

Aid was called in, and soon our poor little favourite's wing was bound up, and he proceeded to gather his customary crumbs of comfort, and notwithstanding every attempt to wean him from his chosen bed of leaves, he continued to occupy it at night. Sad to say, after a few days, just as his wounds had been successfully medicined, the ruthless invader again assailed him; and when we sought the little victim, only a few of his feathers remained to tell his mournful end! My husband's spirits were so upset at this domestic tragedy, that he neither ate nor spoke the rest of the day, and at night his audience suffered in proportion. The moment he returned he went again to the fatal spot, as if still in hopes to find his little favourite, and retired to bed silent and depressed, without his usual reading.

It is very rare when favourites of this kind die in an ordinary way. Tamed and apart from their kind, their instincts are weakened, and some shocking and premature end generally overtakes them, though they may still be said to die a natural death, as I heard Mr. Colman once observe to be the case with

Madame Sacqui when she fell off the rope and was said to be killed.

To the Rev. Thomas Speidell.

Kentish Town, January 19th, 1831.

My dear Speidell,—Rather than allow another day's delay in reply to your kind letter, I will write a hurried answer in preference to none. Briefly,—Charles returned, the most exaggerated case of paralysis on record—a voice only to indicate that the corpse was animated. Streatfield could not magnify it. An attached gem of an Italian servant brought him home, like a portmanteau or any other piece of goods. In spirits good, but even crutches would not support his enfeebled frame. I had four medical men; they all agreed that it was the remains of malaria, and that he would recover without their aid. Judge our surprise and delight and gratitude to God.

This will satisfy you, I know, and you will excuse a longer detail. I really hope and believe he will be able to dance by the end of February.* His mother is now well, and has borne herself like a true woman (not in the worldly sense). I need not say how her time has been devoted; and the sufferer always felt faith that home and mother would restore him. The leeches at Venice had condemned him to winter at Venice.† He called his servant: "Nanini," said he, "put this body into a carriage and convey it to England." Resolution, eh? We all desire heartfelt thanks for your attention, and love to Mrs. Jellicoe,

Ever sincerely yours, C. Mathews.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Bath, January 28th, 1831.

I am remarkably well, though last night I worked like a horse,—two hours at "Table," "May Queen," and "Before Breakfast." The night I arrived I went to see Kean, who was playing to empty benches. From the weather, and beginning on January 1st, I was altogether in despair; but I am more than content. It is a great gratification to me to find myself supported by the people whose opinion alone is worth listeniug to. The upper orders follow me. Had you heard the croaking about the state of property here, you would think highly of what I have done.

C. M.

In the year 1807 or 1808, Mr. Godwin called upon Mr. Mathews. He entertained a great admiration of him in public, he said, and not having any mutual friend to introduce him, he

* This sanguine feeling was not justified by the result; Charles was carried about in the arms of his servant for many months after this, and had not discarded his crutches five months after the above account.

† Charles was six months in bed at Venice, and nearly the same period in England.

had ventured upon the present mode rather than not become acquainted with him. From this time they met occasionally. Mr. Godwin had often witnessed Mr. Mathews's power of personation, and just before Mr. Godwin's last novel, "Cloudesly," was published, he addressed the following request to my husband:—

To Charles Mathews, Esq.

No. 44, Gower-place, February 14th.

My dear Sir,—I am at this moment engaged in writing a work of fiction, a part of the incidents of which will consist in escapes in disguises. It has forcibly struck me that, if I could be indulged in the pleasure of half an hour's conversation with you on the subject, it would furnish me with some hints, which, beaten on the anvil of my brain, would be of eminent service to me on the occasion. Would you condescend to favour me in making the experiment?—the thing will not admit of delay.—I am, dear Sir, with great respect, yours,

William Godwin.

An early day was appointed, and Mr. Godwin dined at the cottage. He was anxious not to shame probability in his work, and requested to have his memory of the past refreshed as to the power of destroying personal identity. Mr. Mathews, of course, satisfied him upon the point by several disguises. Soon after he had convinced Mr. Godwin that he might venture to assume such a power of deception possible in his own plot, a gentleman (an eccentric neighbour of ours) broke in upon us just as Mr. Godwin was expressing his wonder at the variety of expression, character, and voice of which Mr. Mathews was capable. We were embarrassed, and Mr. Godwin evidently vexed at the intruder. However, there was no help for it; the servant had admitted him, and he was introduced in form to Mr. Godwin. The moment Mr. Jenkins (for such was his name) discovered the distinguished person he had so luckily for him dropped in upon, he was enthusiastically pleased at the event, talked to Mr. Godwin about all his works, inquired about the forthcoming book—in fact, bored him through and through. At last the author turned to my husband for refuge against this assault of admiration, and discovered that his host had left the room. He therefore rose from his seat, and approached the window leading to the lawn, Mr. Jenkins officiously following, and insisting upon opening it for him, and while he was urging a provokingly obstinate lock, the object of his devoted attention waited behind him for release. The casement at length flew open, and Mr. Godwin, passing the gentleman with a courteous look of thanks,

found, to his astonishment, that Mr. Jenkins had disappeared, and that Mr. Mathews stood in his place!

Mr. Godwin returned home satisfied, and soon after finished the last volume of "Cloudesly," wherein may be found the result of his visit—the last we were destined to receive from this remarkable and interesting man.

To the Rev. Thomas Speidell.

Chester, August 2nd, 1831.

My dear Speidell,—Though I could not manage to give you a benefit on my way to Liverpool, I think I shall patronise you on my return. The fact is, Charles, and Mamma, and I spent nine days in the neighbourhood of Southampton, and I found a remarkably good conveyance from thence to Liverpool *via* Cheltenham, by a coach called *Hirondelle*, which is converted into *Iron Devil*. I therefore did not get into your track at all. I am going for three or four days to Wales, to visit Mr. Owen Williams, M.P. for Marlow, and an anti-Reformer. The probable time of my visit to you will, therefore, be the week beginning with the 15th ofAugust.

You will be pleased to hear that dear Charles surprised his mother and me by meeting, or rather running to us, without a stick, as nearly well as possible, on the 4th of July, after spending a month at Wootton-under-Edge. I have no doubt, by the time I return, to find him as well as ever. Thank God for such a blessing!

C. Mathews.

Direct to Craig y dor, Anglesea.

Mr. Mathews, with Mr. Yates, opened the Adelphi Theatre on Monday, April 18th, 1831, with the following announcement:—

MR. MATHEWS

Will have the honour to publish the Second Volume of his

COMIC ANNUAL,

In one Part, embellished with new designs and humorous cuts.*

Exordium.—Dr. Johnson's Preface to his Dictionary.—Recipe, "How to prepare an Entertainment for a large party."—First Sketch.—Fat Mr. Waglington.—Hunting in a single-horse chair.—Pleasures of the Chase.—Mr. Waglington's poesy.

Song—"*London Exhibitions*—1830-31."

Nathaniel Nagg, a grumbling footman.—Mrs. Euphemia Blight, one who depreciates friends' relations.—Mr. Littlemiff.—Rights of Man.—The Curses of Street-music.—General Postman.—Dennis Croagh, a Lover of Law.

Song—"*Armagh Assizes.*"

* By Messrs. Peake and Charles J. Mathews.

Country Manager's distress.—Master Scuggs with the scarlet fever.—A substitute for Young Norval (with a beautiful figure embellished by Shakspeare and Shield).—Shop-board disquisition and sheer critical opinions on the Poets of Ireland and Scotland.—Historical subject.—Lieutenant-general Sir Hildebrand Hookah's dictation to three aides-de-camp at one time, with whole-lengths of Major Mangoe, Captain Jungle, and Ensign Hectic.—The Result.—Padding to the Bank.

Song—*The Omnibus.*

After which will be represented, for the first, second, and third times, an entirely new monopolylogue entertainment, in one act, with new music, scenes, dress, &c. called

Yates in Italy, or the Beautiful Barmaid.

Madame Pompeydoor,—Locandiera of the Aquila di due Testa (Swan with Two Necks), at Portici, a French landlady with a knowledge of the English language,—Mr. Yates.

Lord Phidias Crackstone,—a celebrated virtuoso member of the Dilettante and Travellers' Club, making excavations in Herculaneum and Pompeii in search of the antique and beautiful, Professor of the "Unique Leg," hitherto without a *fellow*, and proprietor *in toto* of the matchless *foot*, a great stickler for correct proportions,—Mr. Yates.

Signor Thomaso Jacksonnini,—an Anglo-Italian, formerly of Alley, now Ballerino Principale at the Teatro San Carlos at Naples, taking steps to mend his fortunes, and favoured by Catterina,—Mr. Yates.

Signora Catterina,—ward of Madame Pompeydoor, "La Bella Ostessa," the beautiful hostess of the Swan with Two Necks, attracting travellers to her bar by an indescribable fascination and undeveloped attraction; courted by Lord Phidias, Sir Sturgeon, Captain Cloudesly, and Beau Flamington, but attached to Jacksonnini by the ties of Rossini and a fine calf,—Mr. Yates.

Sir Sturgeon Garrett,—Ex-Mayor of Wandsworth, an amateur legislator in search of a new system of punishment for the improvement of the lower orders,—Mr. Yates.

Fra Diavolo,—genuine as exported from Terracina, in search of the exposed and seizable,—Mr. Yates.

Terence Gossoon,—an Irish cicerone, attached to the crata, and other propensities,—Mr. Yates.

Beau Flamington,—a retired dandy, *ci-devant* leader of the *haut ton*, seeking the Baths of Portici to amend a pecuniary decline,—Mr. Yates.

Captain Cloudesly Ogle,—advocate for the non-intervention system, practising diplomacy on a small scale,—Mr. Yates.

The monopolylogue will conclude with the *Engine*-nious *dénouement* of the characters making the house too hot to hold them.

To conclude with a novel entertainment, a Diapolylogue, to be called

*Nos. 26 and 27, or Next Door Neighbours.**

Mathews and Yates will sustain the following *dramatis personæ* :—

Tim Wasp,—a pertinacious cobbler.
Mr. O'Rapparee,—an Irish member of society (involved).
Poker,—returning officer for the King's Bench.
Phelim M'Quill,—clerk to the London Expectoration Office.
Miss Mildew,—a faded virgin white, beside herself.
Mrs. Bankington Bombasin,—an imaginary proprietress in mourning affairs, and head deranged.
Mr. Capsicum,—a Trinidad merchant.
Cleopatra,—his Negro nurse.
Miss Capsicum,—in love with O'Rapparee.
Old File,—last of London watchmen.
Mr. Cæsar le Blond,—a black Adonis.
Properties,—a little dark-coloured pledge of affection, &c. &c.

It is necessary, in order to understand some of the subsequent letters, to explain that when Charles quitted Venice a helpless cripple, he was accompanied by an Italian servant, one who had never been in service before, and who had, during the four years he attended upon him, conceived such a devoted attachment to his master, that when Charles determined to return to England, Carlo Nanini declared his readiness to attend him, merely to see him safely there, and then rejoin his wife and children in Italy.

This interesting being after his arrival soon became extremely attached to Mr. Mathews and myself, and was so delighted with England, that but for the conscript law, which forbade his boys their freedom, he would have summoned them and their mother to this country, and settled in it for the rest of his life. This could not be, and so he agreed only to remain while his services were valuable to his "dear Signor Carlo," then pay a visit to his family for a few months, and afterwards return to us for three years more. To those who saw Nanini I need not describe his excellent qualities, his talents, his graceful manner to all, and especial devotion to our family. He was beloved by everybody in proportion as they knew him, and he was made known to everybody. My husband was extremely attached to him. Although his origin was of the humblest, he was in effect a gentleman. He had the most perfect tact, with a most extra-

* The whole of the above piece was omitted after the first night, except the character of *Tim Wasp*, one of Mr. Mathews's finest representations, and which was detached from the drama.

ordinary capacity, possessing in himself much talent and humour, with a most remarkable perception of it in others. He scarcely knew a sentence of English, yet understood everybody's meaning. He was beloved by the servants; and such was his mildness, that he never excited envy or anger from those who were not equally taken notice of. They seemed, indeed, tacitly to admit his superiority. He had been with us nearly a year. Charles, whom he had carried about the house for nearly six months after his return to England, had in November become sufficiently restored to proceed to Brighton, and Nanini was of course to accompany him there; but it was observable on the day before the journey that something ailed him, and after a struggle, he consented to remain at the cottage until he was better, when he might follow his master. From that moment he visibly declined, and took to his bed at the end of a week. I grew alarmed, although the apothecary declared his complaint to be of no consequence, and that it proceeded from cold. I felt dissatisfied, however, and called in Dr. Paris, who immediately declared him to be in a dangerous state. Notwithstanding this, his first prescription relieved the sufferer.

Another week had nearly passed, when one morning at daybreak I was summoned to Nanini's bedside. He had said that his eyesight was leaving him, and begged to look at "Madame" for the last time. He then took a most affecting leave of me, thanked me for all my kindness, left affectionate messages to his "dear Signor Carlo" and Mr. Mathews, and closing his eyelids, dropped his head upon my arm, and appearing to sleep, resigned his spirit without a pang!

On the first positive intimation of his immediate danger, I had sent an express to Brighton for Charles. Alas! a second was soon after despatched to tell him that his journey would be unavailing, and that his servant and friend had left him for ever.

I had, agreeably to the expressed wish of Nanini, to have his mysterious disorder ascertained, caused a post-mortem examination to take place, and Mr. Mayo discovered the cause of his sufferings and death to have been an insidious inflammation, which no human skill could have reached, even had the nature of his illness been known during life. It was supposed that the cause of his death had existed for more than six months, although it was not materially felt, or not acknowledged, by the sufferer until the crisis, which came on only a fortnight before he died.

On the first intimation of Nanini's precarious state, a neighbouring friend wrote to prepare my husband for the fatal result, to which I added a page with some particulars. To this letter the following is a reply.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Lincoln, Nov. 18th, 1831.

I should have written yesterday had not your promise of writing again on Thursday induced me to wait. I am so thoroughly stricken to the heart by the melancholy intelligence in your last, that I cannot rally. Neither reading nor any other pursuit can divert my mind from the all-engrossing subject. I shall never think of it without a pang during my life; but in a miserable inn, the hulk-like mirth* and shouting of some hundreds here for a county reform meeting; and having to perform to-night, I must not trust myself to dwell upon the subject. I have never been more truly afflicted, and my audience (only a few, I am sorry to say,) suffered by my having opened the letter before the performance. Had it been in your handwriting, I had determined to keep it unopened till next morning; but a strange hand and no post-mark induced me to open it, and sadly I was repaid for my curiosity, though I had anticipated the worst.

Believe me, my heart bleeds for you. C. M.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Boston, November 21st, 1831.

On my arrival here last night, I found both your letters, much to my relief, for when the third day passed I conjectured some additional blow to my peace. I shall not trust myself to write upon our irreparable loss. It has cost me pangs enough, and I feel it my duty to think of any or every subject rather than that. I sobbed over your letters last night until I was ill. My feeling for Charles, and the picture in my mind's eye of the funeral, and the poor boy's grief, upset me. But, as you say, he is happier than we are, that's certain. God's will be done!

I am at Boston, in England, I believe; but the resemblance to the American of selfsame name is perfect in one thing. It was there I encountered the severe frost. I had to walk half a mile after dark, supported by my manager, first, over frozen barges and boats, and then we slid to the inn. The canal and river were so frozen here that we were soothed by the assurance when we started, that we should be impeded by the ice; luckily the boat from hence went at eight, and we at eleven o'clock, therefore they "broke the ice" for us.

I am delighted poor dear Charles has gone back to Brighton. If I

* It was his usual method of describing a state of forced and boisterous excitement to compare it with the desperate mirth of convicts, to drown their care.

had been cheered by your saying, "I am going with him," it would have sent me to bed in a tranquil state. How he could consent to go without you will yet be explained. You ought not to have remained. It was a duty to yourself to have quitted home for a time.

I don't think I shall get home until about the 3rd or 4th of December. Get thee to Brighton, and let me find you there. I love and adore you for your kindness and devotion, and more for your suffering for Nanini.

C. M.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Mr. Mathews and family at Brighton—His performances at the Pavilion—Letter to Mr. Peake: illiberal exclusion from the Beef-steak Club—Letter to Mr. Gyles, containing a summary of Mr. Mathews's feelings and circumstances at the commencement of 1832—Mr. Mathews's Comic Annual for 1832—Mr. Mathews in his "private box" at the House of Commons—Effect of his presence on several of the members—Singular nocturnal adventure: an escaped felon—A painful accident—Paganini and Mr. Mathews at Southampton—Mr. Mathews's performance at Portsmouth—Another accident—Letters to Mrs. Mathews—Mr. Mathews's fondness for the brute creation—The Duke of Wellington and Mr. Mathews in the Zoological Gardens—A Newfoundland-dog—A stray goat.

In December, Mr. Mathews joined Charles and myself at Brighton,—his refuge and solace under mental as well as bodily suffering. He was heart-sick, as indeed we all were, at the loss of poor Nanini, and we felt the comfort of a release from home and social claims. Here we could do as we liked,—be alone or otherwise, which I take to be one of the greatest benefits derived from such a place, where the mind is wounded or the body delicate.

My husband felt the beneficial effects on both in a few weeks, of which the succeeding letter, written after experiencing the exhilarating effects of the sea-breeze upon his constitution, will give evidence. I will introduce it with the following notice which appeared at the time:—

"Mathews entertained the company at the Pavilion last night with selections from his various entertainments, which his Majesty, and the Princess Augusta in particular, relished highly. This great master of the comic art was afterwards honoured with the society of Lord Errol and Lord Burghersh at his supper-table in the palace."

To Mr. Peake.

Brighton, Dec. 26th, 1831.

Dear Peake,—Merry Christmas and a happy New Year to thee and thine.

On Friday, William, No. 4, invited me to the Pavilion. I worked at

the two annuals for three hours without a yawn—party (almost, if not quite) exclusively of nobility. Everything went off capitally, and royalty in the best of all possible humours. It was really good fun, and I felt it so. I am in high force,—sound lungs (alas! not limbs), capital spirits, and should be quite happy; but I never can be as long as Richards lives, and is stout upon the point, as he told me, that I am excluded by my profession from being a member of the Beef-steak Club. Will this be believed in 1845?

Yours ever, C. MATHEWS.

Although in the preceding letter to Mr. Peake he adverts in a playful mood to his non-admittance as a member of the Beef-steak Club, he felt it in a more serious manner; and the plea, I think, annoyed him more than the exclusion itself; for, as he often visited it (as often, indeed, as he felt disposed to accompany any member), he never could be satisfied at not being a member himself. Certainly it does seem extraordinary that such a plea as Mr. Mathews's profession should have been assigned as a reason for excluding his name from being enrolled in a society where his presence was universally courted and hailed with pleasure. No other profession shared this invidious objection; lawyers, authors, painters, nay, managers, were freely admitted as members, and why not a first-rate actor? In this liberal and enlightened age it is hardly conceivable that a gentleman in one profession should not be as much honoured in such a club as the member of any other; and I could never understand why we should not respect a man who acts well as much as one who paints well. Each "holds the mirror up to nature." With regard to the theatrical profession itself, I am not competent to say anything that can raise it more than the encouragement the highest of our intellectual and moral authorities have already done. Next to the pulpit, the British stage is the best school for general improvement; for, as it has been well observed, "we are there humanized without suffering; we become acquainted with the manners of nations, acquire a polish without travelling, and without the trouble of study imbibe the most pleasing, the most useful of lessons." *

The members of this club were individually persons who patronized the drama, and respected, even courted my husband, there, as well as in their own houses; they therefore denied him and themselves a gratification, in order to maintain some ancient prejudice which had become a rule; and these very persons, who selected their motto from the writings of a "poor player," were

* Aaron Hill.

persistingly adverse to admit one of the most respectable of his craft into their brotherhood. "Will this," as he asks, "be believed in 1845?"

The following letter will be found to contain an affecting summary of the writer's feelings and circumstances at this period:—

To H. B. Gyles, Esq.

Kentish Town, Feb. 1st, 1832.

My dear Gyles,—You begin in your last by talking of my "resolute silence." If I had an opportunity of explaining in person instead of writing, which I abhor, I do flatter myself I could justify myself in your opinion, and you would only wonder that I am disposed to write at all, when I am not compelled. I was absent from home until the last fortnight, from the beginning of October. I have been making a Yorkshire tour. On those occasions I am compelled to forbid all letters being sent after me: my wife opens, and answers all that are really material. On my return, I found my home deserted; affliction had sat heavily on my wife, and she and Charles had fled to Brighton. I had notice of it only in time to prevent my going home. This was in December. I passed through London without coming here. My poor wife had suffered two severe blows during my absence: my brother-in-law destroyed himself and a considerable part of my property at the same time; and the attached friend, rather than servant, of my son, sickened, lingered, and died in our cottage! My son was too ill to bear the afflicting intelligence. She knew my attachment to the glorious kind-hearted Italian, and that I should be unfit for exertion if I were aware of his danger. She therefore contented herself by doing all that could be done to soothe him. She shared the nursing, night and day, with the female servants, clinging to the adage, that while there is life there is hope, until the fiat of the physician dissipated all hopes. Charles was sent for, but too late. He only had the melancholy satisfaction of following to the grave one of the most interesting of all human creatures that ever lived—one to whom he owed his own life—and who volunteered, when Charles was more helpless than an infant, to leave his native country, wife, and children, to "render him" (to use his own words) "into the arms of his beloved mother." I state without hesitation that our boy must have died had he remained in Italy; and he states, as distinctly, that had not the lamented Nanini accompanied him, he never could have dared to venture home in a paralytic state, not to be understood as to extent, or believed without witnessing it. You cannot wonder, then, after three years' knowledge of one of the most faithful of mortals, and feeling, independently of his fun, his various talents for a companion, who had watched Charles nightly and daily for one year of the time when he could not lift his hand even to feed himself—what must be the agonizing recollection that he probably lost his life in preserving ours—for we only lived in the hopes of the recovery of our dear Charles, who arrived apparently a corpse at our gate, voice

alone giving indications of animation. But he is gone, and we have not yet recovered the blow. Nothing in my recollection ever affected me more. Charles forced his mother from the house, where everything, animate or inanimate, reminded her of the melancholy scene she had witnessed, and wisely took her to Brighton, forbidding the servants to forward any letters to her, or acknowledge any had arrived, as he determined she should not be worried by any cares. Letters of friendship, business, applications for "orders for two for this evening," bills, invitations to dinner, new farces, translations of melodramas, petitions from beggars, and circulars from tradesmen, therefore, shared one common fate. You had, therefore, only neighbour's fare; and your first went into your second, and your second went into a hole, and there remained until I returned. You may suppose what a scene was then presented. I have been writing ever since; my eyes ache, my arm aches, and I have had plenty to make my heart ache. Are you answered? Am I excused? My wife begged me to excuse her, as she says she must have appeared "very unkind as well as rude." So much for defence. You little thought how hard you would hit me in one part of your letter; you brought bitter tears into my eyes, and made me exclaim, "I prithee do not mock me!" "Retire!" indeed—"evening of life"—"repose." These friendly wishes as to the means came at an unlucky period. You may guess at my expenditure in living; you may guess that sometimes theatres may be unprosperous; you might (but who thinks on such subjects when determined to make a neighbour rich or poor?), you might try and sum up what Charles's stay in Italy,* and illness, apparently most fatal, in a foreign country, with foreign leeches to fee, cost me; the cost of a carriage with bed inside; posting twelve hundred miles, &c. When you have made a calculation, I will inform you in addition, that a distillery company cost me 800*l.* last year; that ——'s bankruptcy cost me 500*l.* the year before; that on the same day of the autumn of last year I had ascertained on the spot the entire loss of the large sum I had embarked in Welsh iron and coal, &c.; then my brother-in-law's suicide. (I have had my trials, my dear Gyles, I assure you.) The interest I received from him was no trifling portion of that income, which for seven years to come I cannot gain from the Adelphi. All these staggering blows so nearly floored me, that I began to look about me for all that was available in property. Though a trifle, I looked over Mr. Brough's affair. If you are in a condition to do it, I wish you would purchase it back. It would assist me now, I assure you. In a letter of yours, dated February, 1826, you say, "however, you shall have no trouble about it, and I hold myself accountable to you for the uttermost farthing." As to the old lady's dying before me, I have no faith.† It is now six years since that was written: I am not ashamed to say that it would serve me now.

* Four years.

† The aged person on whose life the bond in question was granted—she outlived him.

Have you heard that Charles, on crutch-sticks, lingered on Ross Bridge in hopes of seeing you emerge from your cottage, and was contemplating a surprise, when he was informed you were at Cheltenham? this was last June. You never mention poor Neptune. I hope he is safe. Charles, I am happy to say, now for the first time exhibits signs of returning strength; Brighton has enabled him to throw away his stick.

Remember us all kindly to your wife and yourself, and all yours; and be assured, notwithstanding our apparent neglect, that I am,

Most sincerely yours, MATHEWS.

The following announcement will give the particulars of this year's entertainment at the Adelphi:—

2nd May.

MR. MATHEWS

Has published the Third Volume of his

COMIC ANNUAL FOR 1832.*

Embellished with numerous cuts, eccentric portraits, and various head and tail pieces.

PART FIRST.

Preface.—First Sketch.—*Bachelor Winks.*—Cold Bath and overflowing House.—Suspicious Character.—*Mr. Anthony Sillylynx* and his Hibernian housekeeper.—Infanticide.—Gross mistake.—Turn over a new leaf.—Song, *Morning Lounges.*—Portrait from life.—*Bob Tenterhook.*—Yorkshire genius.—Intellectual Ironmonger.—Black-letter Brazier and talented Tinman.—Advantages of cultivating the mind.—*Mr.* and *Mrs. Masculine.*—Effects of eating a hot supper, and of reading the *Sporting Journal.*—*Sir Griffith Jenkins.*—Welsh Fox-hunter.—Song, *Fox Chase.*—Bachelor Winks in jeopardy.—Melancholy Barber.—A Shaving clause.—American acquaintance, *Mr. Joshua Brandywine Crackit.*—Embark for France.—Dieppe packet.—Scenic embellishment.—*Two in a berth* (not twins).

PART SECOND.

Portrait, a Dutch original.—*Mrs. Oberflachlich.*—Art *versus* Nature.—Perfection in petticoats.—School for Daughters.—Song, *Modern Education.*—Itinerant traders.—Love in a Fish-basket, and a Heart in a Hare-skin.—Street Cries.—Interesting dialogue between Mrs. Hogsback and Mary Briggles.—Coming to a stand.—Song, *Hackney Coach.*—Original sketch from the ocean.—*Tom Piper,* a cruising chronicle.—Mr. Dozy and his watch-dog Busy.—Visit in Lothbury.—Lots of Bargains.—Song, *Auction Mart.*

* The joint production of R. B. Peake, Esq., and Charles J. Mathews.

PART THIRD.*

A monopolylogue, to be entitled the

EDDYSTONE LIGHTHOUSE.

The introductory drop of the ocean painted by Mr. Tomkins; the section of the interior of the Lighthouse painted by Messrs. Tomkins and Pitt; the dresses by Mr. Godbee.

Dramatis Personæ.

Donald M'Quaigh,— } Two lighthouse keepers, whose turn it
Adam Child (aged 90),† } is to be relieved.
Sally Grogrum,—An esteemed bum-boat woman.
Bat Owlet } The two light-keepers who come from
Tom Merryweather, } Plymouth on duty.
Cockswain of the shore-boat,—with a speaking trumpet.

The whole of the characters to be represented by Mr. Mathews, &c. &c.

The unvarying kindness of the Speaker enabled my husband to enjoy one of his greatest delights, namely, the debates in the House of Commons; where he was accommodated with a seat under the gallery, passing to it privately and without difficulty through the Speaker's house. When he first availed himself of this privilege many an eye was turned upon him, with something like an inquiring expression, that seemed to say, "Which of us do you want?" But Mr. Mathews alway felt that he was there upon honour, admitted as a private man; and it is well known, that though for some years he had these opportunities (and who will say he could not have turned them to public use?), he was never known to introduce one imitation, with the exception of a renewal of a former one of the great agitator, when his peculiar voice and manner was not known in England, and without any personal or political allusions. When he first enjoyed what he called his "private box" in the House of Commons, he was visited in turn by numbers of those who were the principal actors in the interesting scene, some of whom would then sound him,—"Here's a wide field for you, Mr. Mathews," one would say. Another would ask, smilingly, "I hope you mean to spare me, Mr. Mathews?" Some would, without any attempt at pleasantry, look seriously anxious; and not until a safe time had passed without any public manifestation of an intention to break in upon the public peace of certain nervous

* By R. B. Peake, Esq.

† One of the finest, most interesting, and pleasing representations of extr[illegible] old age imaginable.

members, were all easy when they saw him seated with his acute eyes upon them.

On these occasions he never took his watch, lest he should be tempted to look at it; and in order that there should be no drawback to his perfect enjoyment, he would not return home to Kentish Town, but was accommodated by a bachelor friend, who lived at Millbank, with a bed, and whose valet had to sit up for his master, his hours being generally late. All this arrangement, he said, gave him no regret at keeping people up yawning for his return; a circumstance which embittered all his enjoyment when it happened.

One night, or rather morning, after an unusually long debate upon some very interesting subject, Mr. Mathews, without knowing the hour, left St. Stephen's. His long sitting had cramped his limbs, and rendered his lameness very painful; he therefore proceeded very slowly towards his place of rest. Everything seemed dead and still as he crept along with difficulty, holding by the iron railing as he went, for he had no stick with him. All at once he heard a low tinkling sound behind him,—he stopped, and the sound ceased also; again he proceeded at his slow pace, and again the sound was heard. Its metallic character annoyed him, and he was not only curious to ascertain whence it proceeded, but anxious to shape his own course so as to elude the tiresome effect. Still, however, the sound seemed regulated by his motions, as if it were a part of them; for every time he made the experiment of a stop it immediately stopped too, and as soon as he resumed his walk so soon was the clinking noise resumed. The morning was cloudy, and objects, except quite close, not easily discerned. However, as he could not but suppose that whatever caused this teasing and persevering accompaniment to his steps must have a will and power to direct it independently of him, he resolved to outstay the effect, or at least the cause of such effect, and leaned against a railing determined to give patience reins. The noise again ceased, and a long pause of unbroken silence followed. He now began to think he should be foiled in his intention of discovering the cause, or, perhaps, that this mysterious sound had altered its course, or had ceased altogether. It was very late, and beginning to be nervous lest he had already trespassed upon his friend's kindness by outstaying him, and so keeping his servant up later than his master's pleasure required, he began once more to urge his uneven steps, when again the mysterious sounds were heard. At this he was in despair, and exerted

himself to proceed at something approaching a rapid pace; the clinking became quicker in proportion, and he involuntarily placed his back against the same kind of resting-place as before, and faced suddenly about, when all was once more silent. But, in a minute or two, the metallic sounds were to be heard for the first time while he was inactive, and in the next moment, out of the dusk of the atmosphere, a human figure came close up to him, rather a startling circumstance at such a time and in such a place. The figure then paused, and in mild and very harmonious tones observed, "I'm afraid, sir, you are suffering? you seem in pain." Mr. Mathews replied, "No; I'm rather cramped by long sitting in the House of Commons, that's all." "But you seem lame, sir!"—"Yes; I am, rather," was the answer. "Allow me, sir, to offer you my aid; I too have come from the House of Commons, and, it seems, am going your way. It will really give me pleasure to see you safely home and assist you with my arm." Mr. Mathews could not discern whether the person's dress was that of a gentleman or not; he could only perceive that he wore a long coat, resembling a great-coat. It was hazardous to make companionship with an unknown, unseen person; however, the kindness of his proffer, the tone of his voice, and, perhaps, more than all this, Mr. Mathews's infirmity of limb, proved powerfully persuasive, and he accepted the offer of the stranger's arm, who kindly, and affectionately even, pressed him to lean hard and not spare him, assuring him that he had been used to attend an invalid, and knew how to feel for one; above all, entreated him to walk as slowly as he liked, for that he himself was in no haste. Just then my husband recommenced his course; and lo! on his very first step, the harassing noise was once more audible. He stopped, as if irresolute. The man mildly inquired whether his pain had returned. Mr. Mathews made an excuse and proceeded, and so did the noise. In a minute a policeman turned the corner, and looking at the wayfarers wished them a good-night. My husband fancied that his companion started and was agitated, and this fancy made him involuntarily pause, with an imperfect intention of asking protection of the policeman.—But from what? While this crossed him the policeman had left the spot; his companion kindly awaited his intimation of proceeding, and on they walked—sometimes slow, then quicker—the humane stranger talking loud but without much method, as my husband hobbled silently by his side, speculating upon the probable termination of the adventure. Suddenly a lamp gleamed for a

moment upon them as they passed under it; my husband's eyes were cast down upon the way his steps were taking, and to his infinite horror he discovered the cause of the noises that had so puzzled him—a fetter was fastened round the ankle of the stranger, from which hung a bit of chain, or something that had been broken from a hold, the end of which striking against the fetter had evidently occasioned the clinking noise described! My poor husband was in reality arm-in-arm with an escaped felon! He had presence of mind, however, after the first pressure which the discovery induced his fingers to make upon the man's arm (and which drew forth an anxious inquiry from his supporter) to conceal his knowledge, but he walked a little quicker, anxious to end the adventure, and somewhat in doubt of the manner in which it might please his new friend that it should end. At last it was necessary to cross the road to the house, and the man asked, in some trepidation, "Are you then at home, sir?" My husband replied in the affirmative, and begged not to trouble him to cross the road with him; but the stranger's courtesy was not so to be stinted, and he carefully assisted his charge to the door. Mr. Mathews was about to thank him for his services, and to offer him payment for them. Before he could speak, however, or put his hand into his pocket for the purpose of giving a trifle to the wretched man, he darted away from the door, and was invisible, and noiseless too, in a few moments.

My husband's manner of accounting for this singular adventure was, that this person was of course anxious to proceed without attracting notice, and in following the steps of another he calculated that his own whereabout would not be so noticeable. The frequent halts made by his companion in advance naturally made him timorous of proceeding, until at last finding lameness or illness to be the cause, he reasonably conceived the advantage of joining himself to a companion who so obviously required an attendant, and thus of diverting the attention of the police from himself, as the sound which necessarily accompanied his movements would not be so distinct while talking and walking with another person as if silent and alone. It was, however, a very uncomfortable situation for my husband, who owned that he did not feel altogether valiant under the expected attack, and the consciousness of his own helpless state of non-resistance. We looked carefully in the next day's papers, but read of no escaped criminal. I fear that, unfavourably to the ends of justice, we felt a hope that the poor fellow had not been retaken, and my

husband was ever after vexed that he had not been allowed to provide the poor outcast with the means of a meal or two in his forlorn plight. Somehow, he could not believe that this man had committed any very heinous crime. He was evidently young, and apparently kind, and with that "excellent thing in" man as well as "woman," a soft-toned voice, which, whether we will or not, makes its imperceptible way to our feelings.

My husband never went abroad without something odd happening to him. This adventure, however, was his last in that neighbourhood, for whether he was himself timid, or only yielded to my entreaties, he never slept at Millbank again, but always returned home after the debates.

In September my husband was invited from Holly-hill, where we were staying with some friends, to perform a few nights at Southampton and Portsmouth, when, by a fatality that seemed to attend him, he met with a very peculiar as well as painful accident. Charles and I had preceded him one evening, after a walk upon the Platform, to our lodgings, by his desire, in order that he might follow us more leisurely than he thought we liked to walk. In a few minutes Charles was beckoned from the room, and disappeared. Suspecting something wrong, I inquired the way he had taken, and followed. A few yards from the house I found father and son on the ground, the first unable to move from pain, the other from a fainting fit, caused by the surprise and shock of seeing his father, as he supposed, dead. The accident was occasioned by a large dog, which running at full speed close to my husband, knocked him down with such violence, that he remained a few minutes in a state of insensibility. He was raised from the ground by the persons who saw the accident, and when restored to recollection, was able to describe his place of residence. On being conveyed home, a surgeon was sent for, and it was found that he had severely sprained his ankle, and received some other contusions of a painful nature.

Notwithstanding Mr. Mathews's state of suffering, a representation being made to him of the great loss his failure to perform on the stipulated night would cause a not flourishing management, he consented to be carried to the theatre on the evening in question, where he was propped up behind his table, and I was told (for I had not the heart to witness the effort) performed delightfully. It is worthy of notice, that when we arrived at Southampton, we found Paganini announced to perform on the morning of the evening fixed for Mr. Mathews's performance. This probable disadvantage to the latter was felt

by the great musician, who sent an agreeable friend of his* to say he would withdraw, for that he could not reconcile to himself opposing a brother artist, especially Mr. Mathews, pleasantly adding, as a reason for mutual consideration, "that they *both* performed on *one string*." This liberal proposition was overruled by my husband, and, as it happened, no injury resulted to him from the more novel attraction. Paganini (who had seen Mr. Mathews "At Home" in his London season) was always most friendly to him, and we subsequently often met him in society.

We now proceeded to a friend's house in the Isle of Wight, where, after some time, the bruised and shaken invalid felt very much relieved, and we at length left Puckaster, with an intention of proceeding home. On the way my husband was pressed to stop at Eastdene, where, soon becoming considerably better, he induced Charles and myself to leave him and go home on business that required our presence. We left the sufferer believing him to be in a fair way of recovery. Unfortunately, after we were gone, he received another injury, and from another dog! Sitting one day basking, as he termed it, in the mid-day sun, in full enjoyment of its scorching heat, an animal with whom he had been in the habit of playing formerly, ran frolicking up and jumping against his now weak playmate, knocked him off the seat with great violence upon the lawn, spraining his right hand severely, and injuring his already suffering ankle. Being unable to rise without aid, and no one perceiving what had happened for some time afterwards, he was found lying in great agony. This additional misfortune rendered him again as helpless as infancy. His host being obliged to leave home, Mr. Mathews, after a few days passed totally in solitude, made a great effort to remove, and at last determined to return to Holly-hill.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Holly-hill, Saturday, 1832.

I am progressing satisfactorily, but slowly; my hand is nearly well enough to bear the pressure of a stick, which is very important. I have to-day had a most delightful expedition, without the slightest injury or inconvenience. Three hours in beautiful sunshine on my element. How did you get to the water-side? you say.—Guess, again;—give it up?—In a wheelbarrow. Fact! And when I come home remind me to tell you how the boatman wheeled me that used to wheel Lady Dundonald, "all about these um grounds." This was her fancy. Why, he could not tell. She was not lame.†

* Mr. Freeman.

† This allusion is not to the present lady.

I am afraid I shall be unpopular; but I cannot help it, and you wont be angry. Mark my words, by about Wednesday or Thursday next, when you are a little reconciled—you admire beauty, and particularly miniature beauty, and if I am a judge you will be more than reconciled—you will be fondly attached; and if you could fall in love with the little beauty of last year, you will be fascinated now. In short, you must send Fowler on Monday at six o'clock, or a little before, to the Gloucester Coffee-house, Piccadilly, to the Red Rover Southampton coach, and he will see Mrs. Morton and her two sons, one of whom will deliver the prettiest white kitten in Christendom. Wait till you see it, that's all.

C. Mathews.

This overweening love for all sorts of animals was such, that I dreaded his seeing any not his own, lest I should have my already over-stocked house and ground still further encumbered. His alarm at his present addition arose from my extreme terror of a cat, although to oblige him, I once travelled in a carriage from Paris with a large Angola cat, given to him by Count d'Orsay. He certainly derived at least one half of his enjoyments from the brute creation, and they afforded him as much speculative interest as the human race, for he discovered varieties and points of character in these his pets as well as in his own species. He became a *fellow* of the Zoological Gardens, purely for the privilege of being able, whenever inclined, to divert himself with the beasts and birds, and would watch them for hours with the most untiring interest and childish merriment. I remember one day, when I accompanied him to see a peculiar and absurd-looking cockatoo placed in that bird-Babel, where the birds all chattered together, the Duke of Wellington accosted my husband with his usual condescension, and taxed him with frequenting these gardens for studies of character. Mr. Mathews did not deny this, for he was ashamed to confess that he came only to play with the animals. It was not true that he was a seeker after peculiarities in human nature; he only picked them up when they fell in his way.

The following is an amusing instance of the notice which Mr. Mathews took of animals wherever he found them.

"Mathews's interest in the curiosities of natural history was not confined to the human specimen. He took great pleasure in horses and dogs. Of his respect for any remarkable specimens of the latter I remember a characteristic instance. I happened to be at Bath once when he was giving his 'At Home' there. As we were walking along one of the principal streets together one morning, a noble Newfoundland dog was sitting sedately bolt upright at a door that we had to pass. As

soon as we got opposite to the dog, Mathews stopped short, went to the edge of the pavement, took off his hat, and made a low bow to the evidently astonished animal, and then passed on without saying a word. 'Do you know him,' said I, 'that you salute him in that fashion?' —'No,' he replied, 'but I have a profound respect for a dog like that, and I generally show it in the way you have seen.'"*

This anecdote reminds me of the following:—During our second year in London, when we lived in lodgings, I was awakened one morning at day-break by a commotion in the house, and I thought I heard the word *coat* reiterated with great emphasis by several voices. At last came a tap at the chamber door, and an inquiry which I translated to my husband into, "Did you bring a *coat* home with you last night?" This question threw him into convulsions of laughter, which were afterwards accounted for in the following manner.

Mr. Mathews had supped out with a party of gentlemen, and returned home between two and three in the morning. As he came up the street, a large *goat* met him, and made a sort of appeal; my husband in return made him a bow, and talked to him as was his habit to animals, making matter out of the circumstance of the time. The goat seemed to be in distress. Mr. Mathews inquired of him whether he was locked out of his lodgings? The animal uttered sounds expressive to my husband's ear of a distressed affirmative, and as he proceeded, the goat turned and walked side by side with him to the door, where he paused, as if determined not to leave him. Mr. Mathews then told him that he regretted his forlorn situation, and feared he had no bed to offer him fitted to his habits and convenience. Still the animal pleaded eloquently in his own way. As the resident was letting himself in with a key, his friend, "bearded like the pard," seemed to say, "Pray don't close your hospitable door against me!" and the petition was not addressed to a callous ear or an unfeeling heart. He was told he should have shelter for the night; and as the lock of the door turned, and Mr. Mathews entered the house, the goat, taking him at his word, rushed by him, and, as if accustomed to its turnings and localities, ran down into the kitchen and laid himself in an attitude of content and thankfulness upon the hearth. There my husband left him after a few remarks upon propriety of conduct, and a tacit agreement on his guest's part not to do any damage to the moveables, or disgrace his patronage.

* "Personal Recollections" of Mr. Mathews.

It appeared that when the servants entered the kitchen the following morning, the sight of this huge horned beast alarmed the females, who in vain endeavoured to turn it out. Every one of the house authorities in succession essayed, but without success, and this occasioned the perturbation, which at length reached the hearing of the "sole contriver of this harm," who, remembering the creature's manner and conduct over-night, was tickled at its present behaviour, and the consternation its appearance in the house occasioned.

I had some difficulty in persuading Mr. Mathews not to keep this animal as a pensioner in the neighbourhood, fearing that his partiality would bring it sometimes as a visitor to me; and it was with something of sadness that he allowed the animal to depart, although he caused it to be traced to a livery-stable yard (where it was evidently valued and had been regretted during its absence), in order to be assured that it was provided for. He often afterwards went to see it.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Mr. Mathews a great hunter after "sights"—The Fasting Woman of Tetbury; the Living Skeleton; Daniel Lambert; Miss Crackham, an Irish Sicilian—Hottentot Venus—Mr. Kemble's visit to the last-mentioned curiosity—A midnight scene: Mustapha the cat, Mr. Mathews, and Mr. Kemble—Mr. Mathews's anxiety for the means of retirement and repose—His losses in bubble companies—His conviction that his constitution was breaking up—Removal from the Cottage to London—The Adelphi Theatre property—Action at law against Mr. Mathews for thirty thousand pounds—Exhibition of the pictures collected by Mr. Mathews—His London residence—His final departure from the Cottage—Decline of his health and spirits—His commencement of his autobiography—His lethargy—Letter from Mr. Mathews to Mr. Gyles—Account of the exhibition of the theatrical pictures—Mr. Mathews at the dinner of the Covent Garden Theatrical Fund: imitation of "Glorious Dan"—Mr. Mathews's "Comic Annual" for 1833.

Until the Zoological Gardens afforded readier indulgence to his taste, Mr. Mathews used to visit Exeter 'Change, the Tower, and the fairs in the neighbourhood of London, for the sole purpose of beholding such beings as were not elsewhere to be found, even of the human as well as other animals. Brook-Green was the spot of one of these pleasurings; and a small party of gentlemen, with similar likings, or else out of a courteous wish to please Mr. Mathews, would annually drive to see the "lions" of every kind.

Mr. Mathews was all his life a great sight-seer—that is, if the curiosity was either a human or any other animal; but he was not a follower of mere pageants.

Many years since he formed a strong attachment to the Spotted Boy, whom he visited frequently. The child loved him very much, and they played together by the hour. When this boy died, Mr. Mathews was much affected. Every one who knew my husband also knew how great a regard he for many years entertained for the accomplished and elegant dwarf, Count Boruwlaski,* with whom he first became acquainted in 1800. The

* Count Boruwlaski died at the time this was written, in September, 1837, at the great age of ninety-nine, but in full possession of his faculties.

Fasting Woman of Tetbury (since, I believe, proved to have been partly an impostor) interested him deeply. Indeed, he never omitted seeing anything uncommon in animated nature; and the Living Skeleton and Mr. Lambert were alike objects of his contemplation. The latter he visited frequently, and found him very intelligent. The half-courteous, half-sullen manner in which this "gross fat man" received the majority of his visitors met the humour of my husband, and he liked as well as pitied him; for it was distressing sometimes to hear the coarse observations made by unfeeling people, and the silly unthinking questions asked by many of them about his appetite, &c.

Where Mr. Mathews's feelings were not interested, he found amusement, and came home with many a droll account of what he had seen, of which I liked to hear, although I always shrunk from the sights themselves. At Liverpool, he was tempted to pay a visit to a Miss Crackham, a young lady of very limited dimensions. When he entered the room, he found her seated on a raised platform, in seeming mockery of regal state, to receive her visitors: she was described to be of foreign birth. The man who attended her, attired in a strange garb, had a tall athletic figure, and formed an admirable contrast to the tiny proportions of his daughter, as he called her. Oh, for the power to describe as I heard this scene described! The lady was a most disgusting little withered creature (although young), very white, and, what my husband disliked very much in any woman, had a powdery look upon her skin. Her voice was pitched in the highest key of childish treble, indeed so thin and comb-like, that it hardly reached the ear of those to whom she spoke. Her "papa," however, considerately repeated all she said, for the satisfaction of her patrons, adding many particulars not mentionable to ears polite. Mr. Mathews was quite alone with them, for Miss Crackham was not "sought after" by the gentlemen of Liverpool—an eternal stain upon their gallantry!—and, after some time, during which the man conversed with increased confidence, derived from his visitor's "attentive hearing," my husband startled the foreigner when he spoke of his birthplace (Palermo), by asking, significantly, whether it was Palermo in the county of Cork where he was born? At this inquiry, the man leered at him in an arch manner, scratching his head for a moment, and rubbing his cheek with his hand, as if puzzled how to treat the question. At last he winked his eye, and putting his finger to the side of his nose, said, "Och! I see your honour's a deep 'un! Sure, your right; but don't peach!" And in order

to lay my husband under an obligation that might insure his secrecy, he offered him, gratis, what was never allowed to the public without additional fee, the amount of which was announced in large letters over the platform, in the following words: "Those who handle Miss Crackham will be expected to pay another shilling." My husband had forbearance enough to decline this liberality and the opportunity proffered, and never mentioned the ingenious foreigner's secret to anybody but his own family, and friends, and acquaintances, &c.

The "Hottentot Venus," as a matter of course, attracted this professed seeker of sights. In those days, when bustles were not, she was a curiosity, for English ladies then wore no shape but what Nature gave and insisted upon; and the Grecian drapery was simply thrown upon the natural form, without whalebone or buckram to distort or disguise it. Well, then, a Hottentot Venus being in that day a novelty, Mr. Mathews of course went to see her.

He found her surrounded by many persons, some females! One pinched her, another walked round her; one gentleman poked her with his cane; and one lady employed her parasol to ascertain that all was, as she called it, "nattral." This inhuman baiting the poor creature bore with sullen indifference, except upon some great provocation, when she seemed inclined to resent brutality, which even a Hottentot can understand. On these occasions it required all the authority of the keeper to subdue her resentment. At last her civilized visitors departed, and, to Mr. Mathews's great surprise and pleasure, John Kemble entered the room. As he did so he paused at the door, with his eyes fixed upon the object of his visit, and advancing slowly to obtain a closer view, without speaking to my husband, he gazed at the woman, with his under-lip dropped for a minute. His beautiful countenance then underwent a sudden change, and at length softened almost into tears of compassion.

"Poor, poor creature!" at length he uttered in his peculiar tone,—"very, very extraordinary, indeed!" He then shook hands silently with Mr. Mathews, keeping his eyes still upon the object before him. He minutely questioned the man about the state of mind, disposition, comfort, &c. of the Hottentot, and again exclaimed, with an expression of the deepest pity, "Poor creature!"

I have observed that at the time Mr. Mathews entered and found her surrounded by some of our own barbarians, the countenance of the "Venus" exhibited the most sullen and occa-

sionally ferocious expression; but the moment she looked in Mr. Kemble's face, her own became placid and mild—nay, she was obviously pleased; and patting her hands together, and holding them up in evident admiration, uttered the unintelligible words, "Oh, ma Babba! Oh, ma Babba!" gazing at the face of the tragedian with unequivocal delight. "What does she say, sir?" asked Mr. Kemble, gravely, of the keeper, as the woman reiterated these strange words; "does she call me her papa?" "No, sir," answered the man; "she says you are a very fine man." "Upon my word, said Kemble, drily, with an inclination of his head, as he took a pinch of snuff for the first time since he entered, which he had held betwixt his finger and thumb during his suspended admiration and surprise—"upon my word, the lady does me infinite honour!" Whether his fine face in reality struck the fancy of the lady, or whether Mr. Kemble's pitying tones and considerate forbearance of the usual ceremonies, reached her heart, it is certain that she was much pleased with him. The keeper invited him once more to touch the poor woman, a privilege allowed on more liberal terms than in the case of Miss Crackham, as it was without additional fee. Mr. Kemble again declined the offer, retreating, and again exclaiming in tones of the most humane feeling, "No, no, poor creature, no!" And the two actors went away together, Mr. Kemble observing, when they reached the street, "Now, Mathews, my good fellow, do you know this is a sight which makes me melancholy. I dare say, now, they ill-use that poor creature! Good God! how very shocking!" And away he stalked, as if musing, and totally forgetting his companion until the moment of separation recalled his recollection.

About this period, these friends had been dining together at Mr. Charles Kemble's house. Mr. John Kemble had taken much wine, and when the party broke up, Mr. Mathews determined to accompany the tragedian to his own door. Giving him his arm, therefore, they proceeded slowly to Mr. Kemble's house in Great Russell-street, Bloomsbury. The tragedian was full of talk, and "very happy," as it is called; and although the hour was late, his pressing invitation to his friend to enter the house with him, induced my husband to obey. It was evident that the man who opened the door was the only person who remained up in the establishment. Mr. Kemble went into his library, accompanied by Mr. Mathews, and desired the attendant to bring a tray, at the same time, with great formality, introducing him to the notice of his guest as the "gentleman who did him the honour

to take care of his wine," &c. It was in vain that Mr. Mathews protested against further hospitality. Mr. Kemble was too much excited to have his spirit easily laid, and, surrounded as he was with books, he began a disquisition upon their authors, above all, his "belov-ed Shakspeare!" on whom he discoursed most eloquently, after taking a volume from the shelf, and devoutly kissing the binding. At length the tray was brought in with wine and water, &c., and with it entered an enormous cat, decorated with a red collar and a bell. The appearance of his favourite cat called forth its master's most affectionate notice, and many relations of its extraordinary powers of understanding, its devoted attachment to its master's person, &c., were detailed to Mr. Mathews. Mustapha, Mr. Kemble declared, had much of human feeling of the best kind in his composition; he described how he watched his return home, mourned his absence, &c., and grew maudlin in its praise. The animal seemed, indeed, happy in its master's presence, and it looked up in his face as it composedly lay down before him. Mr. Mathews mewed; Mr. Kemble, turning round at this sound, which he believed to proceed from the cat, observed, "There, my dear Mathews, do you hear that? Now, that creature knows all I say of him, and is replying to it." This amused my husband, and he repeated the experiment in all the varieties of feline intonation, mewing, purring, &c. Mr. Kemble at last said to him, in his slow and measured tones, "Now, you don't know what he means by that, but I do. Mus!—Mus!" (on every reiteration of this affectionate diminutive, raising his voice to its most tragic expression of tenderness)—"umph! My dear sir, that creature knows that it is beyond my usual time of sitting up, and he's uneasy! Mus! Mus!" But Mus was sleepy and inattentive, and his master resumed his criticisms upon the different readings of Shakspeare, talked also of Lope de Vega, and was again interrupted by a mew, as he believed, from the dissatisfied Mus. "What," asked his fond master, looking down upon him, "what is it you desire, my good friend?" (Mus, alias Mathews, mewed once more, in a more supplicating and more touching tone.) "Well, well! I understand you: you want to go to bed. Well, I suppose I must indulge you." Here Mr. Kemble deliberately arose, put down his book upon the table, with its face open at the page to which he had referred, took a measured pinch of snuff, and somewhat tottered to the door, which he with difficulty opened. He then awaited Mustapha's exit, but Mustapha having no *voice* in the affair, preferred remaining where he was; and his master kindly

reproached him with being a "little capricious in first asking to go, and then preferring to stay." With a smile and look at my husband of the gentlest indulgence towards his favourite's humour, he tottered back again to his chair, resumed his declamatory observations upon the relative powers of dramatic writers and their essential requisites, till the troublesome Mustapha again renewed his mewing solicitations. Mr. Kemble once more stopped, and looking again at the imaginary cause of his interruption with philosophic patience, asked, "Well, Mus, what would you have?" Then, after another pause, turning to his guest, said: "Now, my dear Mathews, you are fond of animals, and ought to know this one; he's a perfect character for you to study. Now, sir, that cat knows that I shall be ill to-morrow, and he's uneasy at my sitting up." Then benevolently looking at the cat, added, "Umph! my dear Mus. I must beg your indulgence, my good friend; I really can-*not* go to bed yet." Mus whined his reply, and his master declared that the cat asked to be allowed to go away. On the door being a second time opened, after similar exertion on Mr. Kemble's part to effect this courtesy, and several grave chirpings in order to entice Mus from the fire-place, the animal at length left the room. Mr. Kemble then returned, as before, to his seat, drank another glass of wine and water, and, just as he was comfortably re-established, the incorrigible Mus. was heard in the passage again, in loud lament, and importunate demand for re-admittance. "Umph!" said Mr. Kemble, with another pinch of snuff—"now, that animal, sir, is not happy, after all, away from me." (Mus was louder than ever at this moment.) "Why, what ails the creature? Surely there is more in this than we dream of, Mathews. You, who have studied such beings, ought to be able to explain." Poor Mus made another pathetic appeal for re-admission, and his master's heart was not made of flint. Mr. Kemble apologized to his guest for these repeated interruptions, and managed once more to make his way to the door. After opening it, and waiting a minute for the re-entrance of his favourite, but not seeing it, he smiled at my husband with the same indulgent expression as before, and remarked, "Now, would you believe it, Mathews, that extraordinary animal was affronted at not being let in again on his first appeal?—and now it is his humour not to come at all! Mus!—Mustapha!—Mus!" But as no Mus appeared, the door was closed with the same deliberation, and Mr. Kemble once more contrived to regain his chair, and recommenced his comments, quite unobservant of the almost

hysterical fit of laughter to which my husband was by this time reduced at the imposition he had so successfully, though in the first place so unintentionally, practised upon the credulity of his grave and unsuspecting friend. But it did not end here, for Mr. Mathews reiterated his imitations, and Mr. Kemble again remarked upon his favourite's peculiarities of temper, &c. Again he went to the door, again returned, till even "Mr. Midnight" (as some friends of ours christened Mr. Mathews, from his love of late hours) felt it time to retire, and leave Mr. Kemble, which he did as he saw him fall asleep, in the act of representing his idea of the scene of the sick king in Henry IV., with his pocket-handkerchief spread over his head as a substitute for the characteristic drapery of the dying monarch.

Feeling the effects of his most serious accident of 1814 increasing, and doubtless other undisclosed sufferings which his death revealed, Mr. Mathews became restless for the last ten years to obtain the means of retirement and repose. His total want of head for the business of life laid him open to every specious adviser that came in his way, and about the year 1824, as I have before stated, he was persuaded by interested persons, under the show of a pure wish to serve him, to sink a large sum in one of the bubble companies. Of course he lost the whole of his venture. Still he listened to the next tempter, and again and again his losses were immense and calamitous in their consequences.

I was consulted upon these speculations, and strenuously urged him not to enter into them, when tears would gush from his eyes, and in a tone which reached my heart, he would say, "If you knew what I suffer from my exertions, you would not scruple at any honest means by which I can make a short road to rest." Yet his mercurial temperament would soon after induce me to view his words more as the feeling of the minute than as coming from any serious cause. I knew, indeed, that he suffered at times severely from his lameness, but I also knew that a sedentary life, or one of entire leisure, was not such as would produce him mental ease or bodily repose. Action was the soul of his existence. He generally acknowledged this, though sometimes he tried to deceive himself into an opposite belief. Alas! I *now* see that at those moments his convictions were strongest that his constitution would not long admit of such exertions; and kindly concealing from me his internal warnings (perhaps not all at once of a definite character), he only laid a stress upon the apparent cause—his lameness; and this plea prevailed when he put it forward with so much earnestness.

A judicious friend at this period induced him to resign his cottage and reside in London for a few years, in order to retrieve the sad effects of former bad advice, and the calamitous results of money given and lent to the ungrateful and dishonest, in addition to sums swallowed up in Companies, into which he ought never to have been introduced. His share of the Adelphi Theatre property was, with his future exertions, all that was left to him, with a drawback occasioned by the last of his speculations in the following shape. The tradesmen employed in this failing concern commenced actions for their several outlays and work, and of course proceeded against the moneyed portion of the partners and shareholders for remuneration. The unfortunate fallacy of Mr. Mathews's great riches prompted an action against him to the amount of thirty thousand pounds; and though this ruinous proceeding was partly averted by the exertions of a personal and legal friend of my husband, the alternative was a compromise almost as fearful, because it was indefinite. The money was claimed of Mr. Mathews by uncertain instalments at unexpected periods, thus placing him in the position of a person liable to suffer one day the loss of a single hair, plucked hastily from his head, and another day two or three more, each bringing tears into his eyes, and sometimes making him wish he had suffered the less teasing operation of losing the whole at once.

In consequence of all these harassing and accumulated evils, Mr. Mathews began this year with a great struggle between inclination and duty, but, as in most cases where my husband had to decide, the latter triumphed. By his repeated and serious losses and speculations entered into with a hope of what he felt must soon be necessary to him—namely, repose from professional exertion—his income was so much lessened, that to continue his present style of living was out of the question. The cottage and grounds required keeping up—no inconsiderable part of the cost of a place of this kind, and the number of servants requisite, with horses, carriage, &c., rendered a longer possession of this prized abode a matter of concern far outweighing its advantages. The first and greatest difficulty was the destination of the pictures. Where could they be placed without injury? and what London house could hold them advantageously? His friends being consulted, advised their sale. This was a blow to my husband's happiness even beyond the separation from his darling cottage. The thought upset all his fortitude. However, he paused before he decided. He then asked who would be the purchaser? "The

Garrick Club ought," it was said, "to have them." This suggestion in a great measure reconciled him to the idea of parting from them. To have them where he could look at them, and, above all, see them kept as an unbroken collection,—this, indeed, would comfort him under a separation. The Club, however, offered so small a sum for the gallery, which had cost Mr. Mathews so much labour and care to collect (about one-fifth of what was originally given for them, without reckoning the interest of money for so many years), that the idea of parting with them was wholly given up. At length, after much persuasion and struggle against his own feelings, he consented to have them exhibited, not so much with a hope of gain from such exhibition, as with a view to their present safety and ultimate sale. Well, indeed, was it that no pecuniary feeling urged their removal, for when the accounts of the exhibition were closed at the end of the period they were before the public, it was found that the loss exceeded a hundred and fifty pounds! The gallery, which ostensibly drew such numbers to our house, while as many more were denied admittance year after year, without the presence of its proprietor, was not found worth one shilling cost to behold! For so it may be presumed, reckoning the average of chance persons with those who for more than twenty years applied for admission, and were refused, parties often presenting themselves at the gate of the cottage, and almost forcing themselves in. Had we yielded, indeed, to every application of this kind, we should not have had an hour in the day free from intrusion; as it was, but few were allowed to us. So many came, whom to reject would have been personally mortifying to us, that our peaceful retreat was converted almost into a fatigue to us, too often having all the character of a show-place, (from which I pray Heaven to defend me!) where we lived more for others than for ourselves.

Well, we turned our backs upon our earthly paradise, "the world before us," but not "where to choose." However, I found a residence so constructed that my husband's objections were consulted, although his taste could not, for it was in London. In fact, he had what he stipulated for, namely, a house within a certain distance of the clubs and the theatre, which he could reach by means of by-streets, with its principal rooms situated at the back, away from the street. I found these at 101, Great Russell-street, Bloomsbury, looking upon a green plot of level ground of about a hundred feet long, with trees on either side, and a terrace before the windows for flowers and shrubs. As he

also stipulated not to live in a fashionable street, where he might be "stared at," his exits and entrances (to speak theatrically) were not marked and remarked by unoccupied neighbours, for he was shy even at a head peeping over an opposite blind at him as he got into his carriage.* Thus all was arranged; and though it was touching to see my husband's parting look at the place we had made, as he rode out at the gate for the last time, he manfully bore up, for a short period, against his change of residence and habits. I proposed to resign the chariot in favour of a cabriolet, in which we could seek the air together; and this pleased him, for he hated a close carriage. But his health now became visibly impaired, and his spirits, in spite of every effort, declined also. Still I was unsuspicious of any constitutional or deeply-seated disorder.

It was about this period that the idea of writing his Life was first seriously entertained. I had suggested to him that a pursuit of such a nature would act in a salutary manner upon his mind and health under present circumstances, by rousing his energies to exertion, at the same time by diverting him from thoughts not wholesome to dwell upon, while he would in effect be realizing a sum of money by his employment that would ultimately reward his labour. To these and similar suggestions my husband at length yielded his serious consideration; and, without premeditation or plan, began the autobiography with which the present memoirs commence. He proceeded at first rapidly to relate what his memory supplied. The occupation seemed to afford him enjoyment, but his alacrity did not last; his undertaking flagged from his utter want of power to devote himself long enough and often enough to make the desired progress. I have seen him, as I left the room, established at his writing-table, pursuing his purpose with apparent diligence and spirit; and on my return, a quarter of an hour afterwards, have found him asleep in his chair. He would afterwards tell me, and sometimes with tears, that he found himself unable to keep awake, for that a lethargic stupor crept over him the moment he began to write or read, which he could not resist long at a time.†

* It had been the custom at the Cottage for one of the servants always to watch, while the carriage waited at the gate, to apprize him of the moment when he might enter it unseen by any passers by: his pony he always mounted and dismounted in the stable-yard.

† This creeping lethargy attended him until the severest part of his fatal illness commenced.

Such was always the result of his endeavours to proceed with his task, and hence the limited portion of manuscript found in his handwriting on the subject. His memory was so all-sufficient, that (unfortunately for this book) he felt no need of notes or memoranda. He proceeded without blot or pause when he did write, his recollection furnishing a ready and, for the most part, consecutive account of what, if it could have been completed by himself, would have been as valuable to his family as entertaining to his readers. Alas! the attempt was made too late; it could not be.

It will be seen, from the following communication to his friend, Mr. Gyles, that he exerted himself to put a good face upon present affairs, and was anxious not to confess the illness from which I now know he suffered severely. The effects of this illness, at the time, I ignorantly imputed to local and dispiriting outward causes.

To H. B. Gyles, Esq.

101, Great Russell-street, April 17th, 1833.

My dear Gyles,—"If this letter does not reach you until you begin your study, I cannot expect an answer." I have taken advantage of this, as you have found out; but, what think you, in addition to this excellent excuse, of having undergone all the horrors of moving? Yes, and here I am. Cottage gone; pictures in London, and on the point of being exhibited. *Multum in parvo.* The why and wherefore may be matter of future information. Suffice it to say, I had excellent reasons for removal. I am in excellent health; but my lower man is much damaged from that *dog*-ged accident. My ankle still weak, and back twisted. I should have opened with, I think, another good entertainment on Monday, but the epidemic, of which I suppose you have heard by this time, is a panic with a vengeance—worse than cholera, though not so fatal. You would not have heard from me until my launch, if it had not been for the death of Lord Foley, who, they say, died of this disorder. If so, this is the only fatal instance. I dined in company with him a fortnight ago, at Lord Harrington's, and he appeared to me to be well. I thought it possible you might not hear of it, if you do not make a greater point than you used of seeing papers. Imagining it might be possible that this intelligence might be important, I therefore determined to give you this notice. He only died yesterday. I will write a longer letter soon; indeed I will. Our loves to you all, and ever thine,

Matty.

In May the collection of theatrical pictures was opened to public view at the Queen's Bazaar, in Oxford-street. Charles hastily made out a catalogue, and, without the owner's interference, all was arranged to his approval. The number of pic-

tures amounted to nearly four hundred. Some idea of the quality of this exhibition may be formed by the following notice:—

As a collection of pictures it is not, generally speaking, of the first—of the very first class; but, as an illustration of Britain's histrionic history during, perhaps, one of the brightest periods that ever beamed upon the land, it is unexampled, and utterly impossible to be excelled. "There hang the players in their single persons" (we quote an essay, "*The old actors,*" by the exquisite Elia, prefixed to the catalogue *raisonnée* of the gallery), "and, in grouped scenes from the Restoration—Booths, Quins, Garricks, justifying the prejudices which we entertain for them; the Bracegirdles, the Gwynnes, and the Oldfields, fresh as Cibber has described them! the Woffington (a true Hogarth) upon a couch, dallying and dangerous. The screen scene in Brinsley's famous comedy, with Smith, and Mrs. Abingdon, whom I have not seen,—and the rest—whom, having seen, I still see there. There is Henderson, unrivalled in *Comus*, whom I saw at second-hand in Harley; Harley, the rival of Holman, in *Horatio;* Holman, with the bright glittering teeth, in Lothario; and the paviour sighs in *Romeo*, the jolliest person ('our son is fat') of any *Hamlet* I have yet seen, with the most laudable attempts (for a personable man) at looking melancholy; and Pope, the abdicated monarch of tragedy and comedy, in *Henry the Eighth* and *Lord Townley*. There hang the two Aickins, brethren in mediocrity. Broughton, who in *Kitely* seemed to have forgotten that in prouder days he personated *Alexander*. The specious form of John Palmer, with the especial effrontery of *Bobby*. Bensley, with the trumpet tongue; and little Quick (the retired Dioclesian of Islington), with his squeak like a Bartlemy fiddle." The essay continues in this strain of babbling beauty for some sentences; we can, however, only quote the conclusion.

"There are the two Bannisters, and Incledon, and Kelly, and Dignum (Diggy), and the by-gone features of Mrs. Ward, matchless in *Lady Loverule;* and the collective majesty of the whole Kemble family; and (Shakspeare's woman) Dora Jordan; and by her two antics, who in former and latter days, have chiefly beguiled us from our griefs—Suett and Munden."

The gallery, as a theatrical collection, is unique, unexampled, and incapable of being excelled. The pictures, as works of art, painted by various artists, and at different times, must of necessity be unequal; they are so. But, then, it is not as works of art that we go to gloat over them: it is to revive the recollections, mayhap of experience, mayhap of reading, and to live in the excellencies of the past, unheeding and uncaring for the present. It is right to observe, however, that there are among them also several pictures of first-rate merit. We would especially particularize "Meg Woffington, lying on a couch, dallying and dangerous," as the delightful Elia has described her; George Frederick Cooke; Eleanor Gwynne, the "Mistress Nelly" of the mob in the dissolute days of Charles; Mrs. Abingdon, as *Lady Bab Lar-*

doon, in the Maid of Oaks; Spranger Barry; David Garrick, "Little Davy," as Dr. Johnson was wont familiarly, more than welcomely, to style him; Mrs. Bracegirdle; Mrs. Oldfield; Mrs. Catherine Clive; Mrs. Robinson—poor Mrs. Robinson! Miss O'Neill, the chaste, the virtuous; Joseph Munden, "the droll;" Michael Kelly—here be his "Reminiscences" indeed; and, finally, for the present, Charles Mathews, the founder of the feast, "mine host of Highgate," with this admirable addenda to the brief notice of his name in the catalogue,

On their own merits modest men are dumb.

The portraits by Zoffany are certainly the best, though there are many by the veteran De Wilde, full of character and identity. It is curious to contrast the peculiarities of the olden actors with the general common-place air of contemporary players. There is nothing so sleek, so unctuous as Suett;—Harley, for instance, has a 5 per cent. 20,000*l.* look—he might pass for a successful linendraper. He has no touch of the picturesque vagabondism of Weston and the immortal Dicky. Farren, too, who keeps a green carriage and footman, wants the oily coziness of rare old Quick. Then, there is Macready; put him beside George Cooke, and compared to the consumer of brandy, he has the staid, severe air of a rich dissenting preacher. Dowton maintains something of the olden time; he looks and speaks as though he had acted with the Jordans and the Lewises.

This collection presents a good history of the stage, told alike by beautiful and curious faces. We read the history of the players, of the people who chatted with Dryden, and who took directions from Goldsmith (it may be in his immortal peach-coloured coat); of the fair eyes that captivated kings; of the white brows that gave a lustre to a coronet. There is beauty of every kind, from the quick, kind-hearted eyes of Nell Gwynne to the soft, languishing gaze of Maria Darlington.*

The catalogue has been drawn up by Mr. Mathews, jun., with great skill, care, and judgment. It is copious and well-arranged, which is not the least part of the treat.

Mr. Mathews was present at the Covent-garden Theatrical Fund dinner this year, and in the course of the evening sang a song from his forthcoming entertainment, descriptive of an election, in which he gave a humorous imitation of "glorious Dan," whose actions and grimaces on the occasion of his speech on the night the House divided after the adjourned debate on the Irish Coercion Bill, he admirably imitated. The pulling about and adjusting the wig, the loosening of the neckerchief, and the divesting himself of that incumbrance, he ludicrously caricatured. The song was rapturously applauded.

* Miss Foote, the present Countess of Harrington; *Maria Darlington* was one of the characters in which she was particularly admired.

Mr. Mathews commenced another "At Home," at the Adelphi Theatre, on the 29th April, with the Fourth Volume of his Comic Annual for the year 1833.*

The following was the announcement of this entertainment:—

PART THE FIRST.

This page—address to the House.—Contrasted Characters.—Messrs. Verjuice and Honey.—The Sun in London—cause of its obscurity.

Chant—*Modern Innovations.*

Private Miseries of a Dramatic Writer.—Mr. Rigmarole.—Interrupted Composition.—Melodrama muddled.—Mr. Josephus Jollyfat, a gastronomer astronomer.—Lecture on the Solar System to his Nephew, and directions for Dinner to his Cook.

Song—*A Christening in Aldermanbury.*

EMBELLISHMENT.

Waiting for a Newspaper.—Scene, a coffee-room.

Dramatis Personæ.

Mr. Tortoise, with the *Times.*—*Mr. Martin Swift,* waiting for the paper.—*Schmidt,* German waiter.

PART THE SECOND.

Embellished half-length of a Lady.—Mrs. Digby Jones.—Conversazione.—Malapropriation of scientific words.—Visit to the Bank.—Cheapside in an uproar.—Police Report, abridged and described in

Song—*A Mansion House.*

Simplicity of the English Language.—Monsieur Ventriloque's definition of the word "Box," twenty significations.

Song—*Street Melodists* (a medley).

Josephus Jollyfat (a sketch in water-colours).—Sir Charles Primtattle.—Water drinking.—Establishment of a Temperance Society.—Effects of Mr. Cooper's wonderful Hydro-oxygen Microscope (with Jollyfat's accurate drawings from living objects).—The Water-tiger and other aquatic monsters of the Deep (ditch).—New Writs.—Visit to the Hustings.

Song—*A General Election.*

* The joint production of Messrs. R. B. Peake and Charles J. Mathews.

PART THE THIRD.

A Monopolylogue, to be called the

COACH-WHEEL OFF.

Dramatis personæ, enacted by Mr. Mathews:

Colonel Catarrh, from Calcutta	*Cold.*
Miss Violet Catarrh	*Warm.*
Grump, coachman to the Colonel	*Luke-warm.*
Simon Sparks, a blacksmith	*Blazing.*
Ensign Fitzmarigold Mackillady	*Red-hot.*

Living adjuncts.—A pair of coach horses and a cockatoo, &c. &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Mr. Mathews's visit to Mr. Eaton—His dislike of transacting business—His illness—His visits to the Zoological Gardens—His fondness for Brighton—Letter to Mrs. Mathews—Effect on Mr. Mathews of an inattentive auditor: anecdote—Letters to Mrs. Mathews—Mr. Mathews anticipation as to his biographer—Letter to Mrs. Mathews: dreary accident on Salisbury Plain—Fatality attending Mr. Mathews's movements from home.

I INDUCED my husband at the beginning of July to visit Mr. Eaton, of Stetchworth Park, near Newmarket; for I thought I saw him languishing for country air. There he was detained by an attack of illness, ascribed to any but the real cause. Upon this occasion he thus wrote to me:—

"I must tell you my situation. On getting out of bed yesterday I found myself quite helpless with weakness in my loins, which Mr. Eaton pronounces lumbago; however, I could not walk, or stir out of the house. I am not any better to-day, as I can only move with the assistance of two crutch sticks, and cannot attempt to stand upright. If I am not at home on Sunday before six o'clock, write a note to Lord Harrington, and explain my case."

Alas! his "case" was then, fortunately perhaps for those who loved him, inexplicable; but each attack was, as I now know, but a gradual step nearer to its final development. He adds, characteristically,—

"I came off, as usual, without enough money for my journey here and back, and never thought about it till to-day. I believe the smallest note now is five pounds, so you must send me one by return."

I have often thought that the very touch of coin was disagreeable to him. He would be weeks together without money in his pocket, such a reluctance had he to its use. He never paid his inn bills in travelling when he had anybody with him who could settle them, either from dislike of transacting business (which was indisputable), or the bows and courtesies which attended such transactions. Antipathy to both these ceremo-

nies made him what is called sneak out of the inn about ten minutes before closing accounts, and walk onward that the carriage might overtake and receive him out of the town, by which he escaped all staring, and the *éclat* of leave-taking.

On his apparent restoration to his usual state of health, he returned home from Mr. Eaton's, tolerably tranquil; but the worm that had preyed upon him unseen, though not unfelt, made fatal ravages upon him from the moment his spirits had ceased to struggle against it, and when the motive for exercise and causes of cheerfulness were removed. In London his spacious and really gay-looking rooms appeared to him little less than a dreary prison.* His resource was the Zoological Gardens, where he was sometimes joined by Mr. Henry Alexander, the celebrated occulist, to whom he was very partial. There he would drive on the days he performed, as soon as he had breakfasted, and sit and saunter alternately about the walks, diverted from his sorrowful reflections by the variety of animals and birds, of all of which he was so fond. His looks suffered; yet as he never spoke of bodily pain further than in relation to his injured hip, I ascribed the change to his natural discontent at a London residence. I pressed him, as often as circumstances would admit, to pay short visits to Brighton, which, next to rural joys, was his favourite scene of recreation. The sea, whether at it, or on it, or in it, was to him a delightful element. He would sit whole days upon the beach or sands watching its motion, and taking an absorbing interest in every distant speck he saw floating. Brighton, moreover, contained several friends to whom he always felt an unvarying attachment. Mr. Horatio Smith, whose addresses were never rejected when he courted Mr. Mathews's presence at his delightful house, where, whether seated amidst its amiable domestic circle, or in a more extended society, my husband found himself truly happy. Other friends, Mr. Lawrence the surgeon, Mr. Masquerier, and many agreeable guests, met at the houses of these gentlemen, and contributed to complete the charm and attraction which Brighton invariably possessed for him. Mr. Mathews was a great admirer, too, of the Rev. Mr. Anderson, socially and professionally, and always spoke of him and of his preaching with enthusiasm. But for these pleasurable resources from time to time, I know not how his spirits could have been sustained under the pressing weight of his disappointments and unacknowledged bodily infirmities.

* In a letter to Mr. Harding he dates from "Great Coffin Street!" but he never betrayed to me his impressions to this extent.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Worthing, August 20th, 1833.

All is going on prosperously, and I can but report good progress. It is highly gratifying that, amidst the wreck and ruin of theatres, I am still fresh with the upper ranks. This theatre opened in July, and closed for a time, from entire desertion. The town is unusually empty. I have got a hotel to myself, and the inhabitants talk of being ruined, if September does not pull them up. Notwithstanding this, and the disheartening reports of "I am afraid Worthing won't answer your purpose," &c. I found every seat in the boxes taken, and I got 22*l.* for three hours' easy work, to a delightfully merry set. I call it easy, when they roar as they did. You cannot estimate the greatness of this success, small as the sum shows. I have already got what Arnold would have given me for a fortnight.

I feel much for you, now dear Charley is gone (love to him when you write), and wish you were with me. If you think a change of air would benefit your health, I would recommend you to join me; but you best know how far it would be advisable. If you would really like it and dislike your solitude enough to embark in such an adventure, I shall be delighted;—write and say. I must return home before I make my "grand tower."

C. Mathews.

It was quite extraordinary how much his spirits, while performing, were affected by the discovery of any inattention, however partial, in his audience: his eye always caught a view of a careless observer, or a sluggish listener. Like Haman the Agagite, who, "in the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children,"—in the midst of universal homage and honours, confessed himself dissatisfied. "Yet all this availeth me nothing," said he, "so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." These were the words of this ambitious minister. My husband was equally discontented, though receiving the applause and praise of assembled thousands, if he saw but one man seated before him who "bowed not nor did him reverence." Unlike Haman, however, he did not "scorn," in this case, "to lay hands on Mordecai alone," and take personal vengeance on one who "stood not up nor was moved for him."

It happened that one night of his "At Home," soon after he began his entertainment, he observed in the second row of the pit a heavy-looking man fast asleep. From that moment he seemed to forget the rest of his audience, and this man became his "peculiar care"—his Mordecai; and the homage of the whole theatre besides was nothing to him while this one man stooped not to acknowledge his power. Still he proceeded, and with his

usual effects; but no laughing, no clapping of hands, disturbed the sleeper. Thunders of applause had no effect in rousing this lethargic nuisance. The performer began to flag in his exertions: he gazed on Mordecai, "sighed and looked, looked and sighed, sighed and looked and sighed again," but all in vain; and soon the audience began to observe where and to whom his anxious eyes were directed, and joined gradually in the interest he felt in the sluggard. At last, Mr. Mathews, full of his determined revenge, took occasion from some favourable portion of one of his subjects to utter a loud "hem!" so sharp and startling in its tone, that the drowsy pittite shook himself from his rosy slumbers. Staring about in a bewildered manner for a minute, he raised his still sleepy eyes upon the performer, who, seizing his advantage, fixed him with the power of a basilisk, and from that instant played at him, and addressed every point to him, until by degrees he entirely awakened this first of the Seven Sleepers, who, before the evening was over, became not only one of the most attentive of the auditors, but the most lively amongst them.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Ryde, August 28th, 18—.

Well!—and I have cleared more here than in any place since I have been out, though the smallest theatre I ever acted in: it is reputed not to hold 50*l.* I had 43*l.* without a gallery, I may say, which is large in proportion to the pit, and was nearly empty. The pit only holds 8*l.*, and the boxes positively overflowed. Delightful merry set, and the sensation peculiar as to exultation over S——.* Many even of his followers attended, who dare not attend the theatre before he drove the players away. It has ended in petitions for a second night. I have at length complied, which is one cause for my delay; very many places are already let. Huzza! Nuts! I perform at Gosport to-night. It is all beauty here. We see Portsmouth, and the wide "salt-sea ocean" from every window in this house. "Beauty weather," and I am going to 'bark in "*stim*"-boat.

C. Mathews.

Ryde, August 30th.

At the time I was undecided about my return, I did not know whether I should play here to-night or to-morrow. Julian Young also persuaded me to try Andover. He was to meet me to-morrow seven miles from Southampton, drive me to his parsonage, preach to me, and feed me on Sunday. I cannot put him off, as my letter would not reach him till Sunday, and he would crane his neck for me all day to-morrow; so on Monday, look for me. I expected very little at Gosport, but had a

* A clergyman who had been preaching against theatrical amusements.

better hit than at Portsmouth, which was bad, 32*l.*—being one hundred and eighty-five people in a room, very quiet.

I had at last, yesterday, my favourite project of a voyage round the island, for which I longed so much last year. We started at ten o'clock, and got back at five o'clock, having seen every inch of the shore. I saw darling little Puckaster,* but none of the inhabitants, which made me feel melancholy. Milly Fozard, Miss Fro-zarde, or Fogard, or Fosset, as she is called here, and one hundred and fifty others, accompanied me. Too many; but the day was so delightful, I forgot all annoyances. Sea passengers have the best of it; for there is nothing but brown green in the island—all burned up.

C. Mathews.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Chichester, Thursday, 1833.

The races do not finish till to-morrow, but I mean to return according to promise. I wish you would contrive to send to the boatman who carried me to the steam-boat, to tell him to go off to the same steamer, which leaves Cowes between four and five o'clock to-morrow, Friday, August 17th, so as to convey me to Holly Hill. I have already engaged him for the job, but promised to give him notice of the day. Do not be alarmed if he does not find me on board, as, with an excess of racing population, the difficulties of getting hence may be great; therefore, if I do not arrive, be sure that I am detained by circumstances over which I have no control. I fell on my legs in coming. I was inquiring of the captain of the steamer if I could get from Portsmouth in a boat to Chichester, who had answered "No," wind and tide being both adverse. This was overheard by Lord Uxbridge, who volunteered a seat in his carriage, which, don't be astonished, I accepted, and he put me down at my lodgings! There! I hung my head when the passengers assembled to stare at my little boat, and sneaked on board; in three seconds I was surrounded by Sir William Curtis, Mr. Surman, Captain Gelstone, Lord C. Manners, Lord Uxbridge, and Captain and Lady Agnes Byng, &c.

C. Mathews.

I have felt and scrupulously acted upon the feeling throughout these pages, that the partialities and weaknesses of an over-weening affection should meet no eyes but those to whom they were originally addressed, unless occasionally, in trivial instances, which served to reveal the writer's peculiar kindness of disposition. Yet, in the following letter there is a paragraph so curious, as the event has fallen out, that, after some hesitation, I have determined to allow it to remain. I solicit, however, the reader's most favourable construction of this act, while I depre-

* The beautiful residence of our dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Vine.

cate the severity and "odious comparisons" likely to cross the mind at the revelation of so partial a judgment.

The implied parallel between my weak powers and the giant force of him referred to may reasonably expose me to ridicule, unless judged with good nature, and the publication of it ascribed to the sole motive of proving the remarkable fact that my husband thought me the fittest person to assist him in the task of writing his life—a fact I had totally forgotten till I began to arrange his letters for my present purpose.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Worcester, Oct. 11, 1833.

Having now completed the affair, I write, as you wished, to inform you "how it answered." I have not one fault to find with the carriage. It was put to the test by cross roads, perhaps the worst I shall encounter, and nothing can run easier. It has all the effect in sound of the lightest chaise. Not even a look at it from the innkeepers as to weight; and one horse from the inn at Banbury drew it to the theatre with perfect ease. It is evidently, though out of the common way, not remarkable enough to create a mob. Indeed, it was hardly looked at in our exit from Banbury. I am sure you will be delighted, as I wish you to be, at this termination of your labours. "The Reverend" went with me to Banbury; and we had 4*l.* more than he said the theatre would hold—namely, 24*l.* 8*s.* It was crammed. The boxes hold seventy people; the gallery fifty!!

We dined at Doctor Rattray's on Tuesday. On my arrival here, William Crisp would insist on my coming to his cot at St. John's; and here I am in a garden, and quite at my ease, which I could not be at mine inn; for they are coaching all day and night, and Mr. Dent, my former host, is at Brighton.

If you do not tickle up my matter for me after I have put it down, I will not continue my "Life." If you will, I go to work; and I am sure you will be a Hook in my reminiscences.* Say you will; I only want this to take off my nervousness, and I'll write like wildfire.

C. Mathews.

Could the self-depreciating writer of the above have been told that his manuscript, then only begun, was destined never to be finished by his own hand, how would he have been satisfied to know that it was reserved for the person whose power he so overrated to complete his undertaking, when "grief-shot," mind weakened, and health enfeebled by his loss! Could he have anticipated that he to whom he alluded would at one time meditate a continuance of his undertaking, and that eventually the task would fall (literally fall) wholly into the unpractised,

* Mr. Theodore Hook edited Mr. Michael Kelly's "Reminiscences."

unassisted hands of her he proposed should only aid his own work—might he not, with all his partiality, have deplored that he ever begun it?

I have set down probably much that may, like the Scotch lady's story, be condemned as "no worth the telling," and be rated with Gratiano's "infinite deal of nothing;" yet, in relation to personal peculiarities, trifling incidents sometimes materially assist to delineate character, as small touches of the pencil serve to give force and finish to a likeness. My husband's friends saw only detached portions of his character; those alone who lived with him could view the whole of its varieties: and in this respect I possess an advantage. From long observation, I am enabled to show every shade of his mind and disposition, though perhaps not to give their just measure and value. This solitary advantage over a more competent biographer is the chief reconcilement to my undertaking, and my feeble effort to support my husband's fame and character. It will, I hope, act in a similar way upon the public, before whom I have ventured, and for which presumption not I, but circumstance, must be blamed.

My husband's next letter communicates one of those incidents which it seemed his peculiar fate to experience.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Weymouth, November 6th, 1833.

What mystery is it that directs my destiny? Am I reserved for some remarkable close to my adventurous life, or am I to hope a calm and quiet close to my chapter of accidents. That I am protected amidst dangers I cannot mistake, nor can I help being bewildered with the why do I meet with more buffets than any of my friends.

I am well, and have suffered nothing, and therefore would never have related my adventure to you but that it may be erroneously reported from other quarters. As my servant was absent, and the carriage obliged to be in Salisbury on Monday, I was too glad to spend all Sunday with Charles Young and Julian, in preference to remaining alone at Salisbury. Julian volunteered to drive me, the distance being only twelve miles from his house—eighteen from Andover—beautiful day; Charles Young accompanied us on horseback six miles across the Plain. In the way, they told me it was only a bridle-road, but that they knew every inch of it, and it was as pleasant to travel over as a macadamized road. They described the difficulties people met with in finding their way off the Plain. Sir John Paulin had last year been lost, and literally remained on horseback all night. About an hour after Charles Young left us we came to very rough ground, and I was shaken once or twice enough to make me cry—Oh! At last a collection of ruts made it evident that wheels, springs, and all were in

danger. Julian paused, and proclaimed the necessity of getting out to lead the horses over, requesting me to remain within. Oh, had I!—my impulse was not strong enough to make me immediately decide; but the Providence that watches over all, and has hitherto protected me, was my guide; I got out, and in a half minute an agonizing exclamation of "Whoa!" was followed by my companion struggling with the horses, and before I could scramble with my weak limbs to assist, we saw the affrighted wild animals galloping at speed away with the light vehicle over Salisbury Plain. It was undulating ground, and from their ascending a steep bit they were totally lost to our view in a very short time. I advised Julian to run as fast as possible; and if he could keep them in view he might, at all events, see the result. He left me—he followed in the track, mounted the hill, and then I lost sight of him.

I remained, I believe, but a few minutes, when I saw him returning, waving his hat over his head. I concluded the carriage and horses were found or stopped. No! he had not seen them; but, all anxiety for me, came to say he knew one landmark on the hill, which if I could walk or crawl to, he should know how to find me; that he had ascertained we were within a mile and a half of the high road, and then but four miles from Salisbury. He assured me if he could not find his carriage he would go or send for a chaise to fetch me, and left his coat in my care that he might run the lighter, and again departed, on the hopeless errand of overtaking two horses galloping at the rate of twenty miles an hour.

I shall not attempt to describe my feelings when left alone on this wild heath. I call upon your imagination to assist me. "Helpless, forgotten, sad, and lame," I lay on the bare ground, after praying on my knees to be rescued from my desolation, and returning thanks for my miraculous preservation; for had I remained in the carriage, Julian would have had the additional horror of seeing me borne away by the desperate animals, for the pole was broken by the uneven road, and his power of holding them entirely taken away by a blow from the point of it on his breast, which compelled him to quit his hold.

My reflections on the nature of my losses, and the possibility of repairing them—having the whole of my luggage with me, money and all packed within, &c.—you must fancy. My bag had supported my legs, and was loose in the front of the vehicle, and the portmanteau not secure, as it was an entirely open carriage without a head. I was encumbered with my heavy coat. I got on my legs, and, without a stick (which was left in the four-wheeler), proceeded a short distance, but then, exhausted, sat down. My gouty toe, after being what I thought well, gave way (not that it is gout), and I crept on my hands and knees to the furze on the hill, where I was directed; altogether about half a mile, it is supposed. There I was seated, with a possibility of remaining all night. The world before me, but no choice. Not a house, not a human being to be seen—a wild waste immeasurable, and a shower of snow to cheer my spirits. After reflecting on the cold ground I know

not how long, I saw at about half a mile distant a man on horseback; I waved my hat, my handkerchief—he saw me not; I shouted, he heard me not; a human voice, however rough and dissonant, would have been music to my ear. He seemed to direct his course towards me—good God! 'tis Julian! he brings me rescue from this comfortless bed. Again I shouted, again I waved my silken signal—still there was no recognition. I thought it could be no other than Julian—surely he must see me if it be he; here I am at his own appointed spot.* 'Tis, he—'tis he,—alas! no. He turns from me, and again I am left, perhaps to perish, unheeded, helpless; no friendly voice to cheer me, no human arm to lift me from the sod. The only chance of help I had seen disappeared in the dip of the hill in the old Roman road, the various fosses of which met my eye and impeded the view of the road, which was nearer than I thought. In a short time the horseman, to my almost wild delight, reappeared; the movements of the form, the turn of the head, indicated an inquiring look—the rider was evidently in search of an object,—he was, a wretched one. My hopes revived. 'Tis an iron grey,—I know the horse; it is Julian: I waved my hat,—I could not get up; 'tis a countersign—he sees me, he waves in response. My knees obeyed, though my legs had refused their office, and I returned loud thanks to God, for it was evident the horses had been stopped.

Our meeting was curious. An hysteric affection appeared to make him laugh at the accident. He told me that after the ponies had run for a mile and a half they encountered the stump of a tree, about four feet high, which had impeded their course, completely overturned the carriage, and by a sudden shock broke the traces all to atoms, by which they were disencumbered and released from their clattering followers and all their responsibility; and that they must have remained instantly still, for there Julian found them, close by the remains of the phaeton.

There was a camp of gipsies near the spot, and to their immortal honour be it known, that though they had assembled round the wreck before Julian appeared, and had abundance of time to appropriate our scattered luggage—for the bags might have been popped into their camp, and we should have concluded that they had been shaken out, and that all search was useless—they had not touched an article: all was safe, even to three sticks and an umbrella—nothing shaken out till the overturn. Is it not marvellous? Had not this stump, and a fosse within their sight have impeded them, it would be useless to conjecture whether they would have galloped five or twenty miles, or whether they had been found at Southampton or Andover.

I mounted (with the assistance of a gipsy, who fortunately appeared, and Julian on all fours, I treading on his back) his barebacked pony, and without stirrups, of course. He led the animal, and on foot protected me, forgetting all his cares and losses in his affectionate anxiety.

* It will be obvious that Mr. Mathews mixes a mock romantic style in this description, in order to lighten the serious effect the accident might otherwise have upon my feelings in reading the account of it.

Thus, in agony from hip and toe, did I accomplish three miles. I managed to accomplish it, but nature at last was exhausted, and I proclaimed my inability to proceed. We were then two miles from Salisbury, and I sat down by the roadside. At this moment a stage-coach most opportunely presented itself; we got on the top, a man from the roof descended to lead the pony, and we arrived safely. Julian immediately took a chaise, and at six o'clock returned with every article safe, the dilapidated phaeton excepted; this had been fastened with ropes and attached to the chaise. I gave my entertainment that night in Salisbury; and you may suppose what were my balmy reminiscences of such events when I laid my head on my pillow.

CHARLES MATHEWS.

There seemed, indeed, a fatality attending all my husband's movements from home. How many severe and dangerous accidents did he encounter in the course of his life! First in Ireland, in 1794, he was almost drowned (I might almost say actually, for he suffered all the pains of such a death), and was taken out of the water in a state of total insensibility. In 1801 a heavy platform fell upon him while acting, and he was taken off the stage as dead. In 1803 he was violently thrown from his horse at a review, and was threatened with dangerous consequences ever after. In 1807, on a shooting party, his gun burst and shattered his hand, and he was many weeks after under a surgeon's care. In 1814 he was thrown out of his tilbury, and became lame for life! In 1817 another horse fell going down a steep hill in a tilbury, and Mr. Mathews was thrown over the animal's head and severely cut and bruised. In 1827, while in a floating-bath at Brighton, the "life-preserver" turned round and forced him upon his face, in which position he must have been suffocated had not a gentleman witnessed the accident and rescued him from his danger.* In the year 1829 the roller of the drop-scene on the Plymouth stage fell upon his head while "At Home" there, and he was taken up to all appearance dead, and remained many minutes in a state of insensibility. Four years after this precisely the same accident occurred in the Devonport theatre and with the same results! In 1833, while returning from an evening walk, a large dog ran between his legs and knocked him down with a violent shock. This accident again placed him under a surgeon's hands. A few weeks after, while recovering from this hurt, another dog threw him off a

* Should this meet the eye of the humane stranger, let it inform him that it was a cause of deep mortification to Mr. Mathews, that in losing his card before he left Brighton, he was prevented from calling upon his preserver in London, and expressing his thanks for his aid.

garden seat, and painfully injured his hand and wrist. But the last trial was the most severe since that of 1814.

When all these accidents are remembered, it would appear that he bore about him little less than a "charmed life." That he escaped as he did, twice from the curtain peril, was miraculous, when we consider the impetus given to the roller of the drop-scene as it falls.

The situation in which he found himself on Salisbury Plain—the last of his "accidents by flood and field," was quite as memorable as that which injured his bodily health for life; that left a lasting personal evidence of its severity—this an indelible impression on his mind. Let those who marvel at the stress laid on this last peril travel over that dreary waste in the month of November, in severe weather; let them imagine their limbs helpless and in pain from accumulated injuries, and then, after the agitation of such a misadventure, let them reflect on its possible consequences to himself, on the approach of night, with a possibility of not being discovered by his absent friend when he returned to seek him on a plain where there was scarcely a distinguishing feature to mark the spot on which he had left him.

On hearing my husband's oral report of his feelings from this accident I ceased to lament the event, for I became perfectly assured that it left a more lively faith upon his mind, and disposed him to meditate more frequently and more deeply upon a future state; and his reliance upon his Creator, who had so signally shown His protection to him here, and preserved him from so many perils, was accompanied by a firmer belief that He would not forsake him hereafter. With these impressions full in my recollection, I can never think or hear of Salisbury Plain without considering it a hallowed spot, consecrated by the bended knees of pious supplication and the upraised voice of prayer and thanksgiving to the Most High from a soul sanctified by His mercies.

CHAPTER XL.

Serious illness of Mr. Mathews—His sufferings—Letters to Mrs. Mathews ; Corbyn's Hall ; Fop's first appearance on any stage ; Mr. Mathews's reception at Birmingham—Letter to the Rev. Thomas Speidell—Letters to Mrs. Mathews—Inns ; application from the Covent-garden Theatrical Fund—Mr. Mathews's speech at the Fund dinner.

The following letters will show how rapidly my husband's disorder, which was destined to be fatal, was gaining ground, and at the same time how he rallied from time to time, owing to the buoyancy of his spirits ; still I entertained no alarm for the ultimate result of the varying symptoms.

I was deeply distressed that the poor sufferer should have occasion to fatigue himself under such visible indisposition ; but I little deemed that his strong principle and great fortitude were urging him to exertions that every moment forced him nearer to his tomb ! I am now assured that he did not reveal half his sufferings, but struggled secretly through them, from a rigorous determination to pursue his duty at all risks, and with equal determination to prevent my knowing the extent of his efforts.

It may be observed, in proof of his anxiety to keep my mind at ease and to lighten it, when necessity compelled communications of a distressing nature, such as accidents or illness happening to him when from home, that he always contrived to relate them in a jesting or playful manner, in order to divest them of the power to occasion the painful effects they were otherwise calculated to excite in my mind. What forbearance did all this require !—what innate goodness of heart did it reveal !—and what an unpaid debt of gratitude has it left upon my memory !

To Mrs. Mathews.

Corbyn's Hall, Dudley, Jan. 7th, 1834.

Here I am laid up in cotton, "*presarved away,*"—but unfit for work. I am sewed up. That Drury-lane box !* I felt then to a certainty

* He attributed a hoarseness from which he at this time suffered, to a cold

what must happen. I am hoarse and cannot act. Had I not felt compelled to go to Cheltenham, I might have fought it off, but three hours' tearing of a damaged throat must succeed in destroying it. Sleeping in a cold mail all to myself could not have improved it; and I felt on Saturday morning, much as you did on Christmas-day, when you were obliged to write with a pencil instead of speaking. None can feel better for me than yourself; but imagine that you had been advertised to sing in a day or two, and you will comprehend my situation. On Monday here, I issued handbills and postponed. My wheezing is very troublesome.

I had an invitation from my namesake, Charles Mathews's brother William, to spend my two or three days, two miles from Dudley and three from Stourbridge, where I was to have appeared on Monday. C. Mathews drove me here on Sunday, and I am luckily in clover—delightful house—cosey—and with real comforts. He is an iron-master and proprietor of collieries—so we are too warm—as he is. I am grateful, very highly so, indeed, that I should be so situated; for Hagley, charming in summer, is but a village inn,—and Stourbridge, oh! such a dungeon! I am really welcome and quite *Speidel*lized; so be quite easy about me, excepting the money part of the business. However, it is useless to repine; no help, and no hope, but rest. I might have been in a narrow street all the time. I am now looking at five miles of beautiful view, with the Wrekin to boot. I had forty miles journey on Saturday, and it poured incessantly from the time I left Oxford at half-past two Friday morning, until last night ten. To-day summer,—lovely sunshine; I hope to hear that your cold has abated. I do not expect you can be yet well.

C. M.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Corbyn's Hall, Jan. 9th, 1834.

I am as per last with respect to the wheezing, &c., but my working voice is greatly improved; my little boys can reply to me, and I return to my shop to-morrow.*

"No dog can behave better:" I was afraid of Fop here at a private house, but he has duty to do all day; large lawn, lots of sparrows to drive away, and Mrs. Mathews is fond of pets, so he is in clover as well as his master. He sleeps in my room, and not a sound do I ever hear until he ascertains I am "waking up." He is the quietest and nicest of animals, I therefore do rejoice I brought him away from "the fancy."† I have not a notion what "the tub" contains. I am also at a loss about Mr. Mortimer Drummond.

and comfortless private box. Alas! the occasional failure of his voice at this time was a part of his disorder.

* Whenever his voice had suffered in any way, the test of its recovering was his being able to speak in the tones of children.

† This little favourite, a black-and-tan foxhound-terrier, and the most

"One of the most attractive and best written stories in the work* is, we understand, that of C. Mathews, jun., the author of 'My Wife's Mother;' it is entitled 'The Black Riband.'"

Pouring all yesterday and to-day. To be sure, I could not go out if it was fine.

C. M.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Birmingham, Jan. 13th, 1834.

My poor dear sufferer, your letter has made me very unhappy: ill and alone! Pray write, if but one line, by return, to say how you are: pray do.

Fop made his first appearance on any stage last night, Cheltenham. He has always remained perfectly still in one spot for three hours during the performance, but last night Mr. Moss left the door open where he had been deposited, and just as I was saying, "This young gentleman's name is Norval," he found me, and wagged his tail; but I never saw him; yet did it he did. He gives no trouble whatever.

I am charming well again as to voice, but my cold is not quite gone. I did my work, however, marvellously, in so large a theatre. I have so often related the greatest thing that I have done, that I thought wonder could no further go. I think you heard me declare I would not give 25*l.* for the Brum. theatre; Crisp, however, came over from Worcester at Christmas, and being more confident as to my attraction than I am, bargained for 50*l.* for three nights. I fear to announce the result, for the thirty and forty pounders I am coming to soon will appear too insignificant to excite your attention. I had this great theatre crammed full, every seat below taken, and 224*l.* in the house: nearly one thousand persons in the gallery. Since the early English Opera days, I have never equalled this quite alone, and on my own account. I cannot expect half as much again; but there is now a respectable box-book for to-morrow.—What a thing! The quiet attention of such numbers of manufacturers up above is perfectly curious.

I go to Wolverhampton on Friday for one night.

Cod's sounds! and was that the end of the tale of a *Tub*. But what of Mr. Drummond?

C. M.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Corbyn's Hall, 20th Jan. 1834.

I slept here last night in my way to Stourbridge, where I dine to-day, sleep at Hagley, and proceed for my third night to Birmingham to-

intelligent of its race, had been stolen several times since our return to London.

* Heath's "Book of Beauty."

morrow. I meet with nothing but kindness and hospitality in these parts. I am nearly restored—all but a little wheezing. I had 50*l.* at Wolverhampton, which is about as much as the house will hold; but these small figures, as I warned you, must be looked at as great in such towns. What a week! I don't expect less than 100*l.* to-morrow, and that will be such a week as!! never—Five hundred from Monday till Tuesday—for my second at Brummy was 130*l.* Perfectly wonderful! but remember my expenses,—don't be too much dazzled. How fortunate Crisp had more confidence in my attraction than I had myself, for I had indignantly refused to give the 25*l.* for the theatre.

From hence I proceed to my Yorkshire estates.

I can do no more than I am doing: thank God for my strength and willingness to work!

Fop's second appearance was not so effective as his first. It was at Wolverhampton, where he was not noticed even by a laugh, and he sat down contentedly before the green baize table and waited until I left the stage. Love to dear Charley.

C. M.

To the Rev. Thomas Speidell.

Lichfield, Jan. 23rd, 1834.

My very dear Speidell,—Your first wish, if I know you, is to hear of my success. I have to record, then, my greatest week out of London, and our nearly greatest week in. Our bathing machinery, too, is a hit; the ladies of the bath have enticed instead of driving away the ladies from the boxes. Here Yates has beat me in judgment hollow; and I am free to acknowledge it. Last week produced nearly 700*l.*

Mrs. Mathews has been seriously ill: her disorder finished with jaundice. She is now staying with some friends at Clapham. Charles has been acting *Mr. Simpson* at Woburn; the Duchess, *Mrs. Simpson* —he says capitally.

I paid my visit to Sir ———, Knight, of Hxfyhldy and Ghfq, grand star Ivimgum peccacs, first gentleman usher to the—pshaw!—I forget. I wish, though, he would not call names: I don't so much mind his "The *all* is the largest;" for it is no more than a truism, one would think, and he can't pronounce it otherwise. In addition, however, to his asking me if I had been annoyed with a shower of *ale* in the night (which was a most powerful home-thrust, I having suffered from drinking a glass of what he would have called *hale*), he called my son a harchey-tect. Such men ought to be knighted. Joking apart, he can give one a great treat. The mosaic is a most magnificent, glorious work of art, and I was highly gratified. And now, dear Speidell, as I have two managers, four printers, and some York theatre trustees to write to this day, excuse brevity.

Kind sayings to the Doctor and all the nine Rattrays, Bird and Co., Lake, &c.

Ever sincerely yours, C. Mathews.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Elvaston Castle, Jan. 26th, 1834.

I am here fulfilling an engagement made last July.* Magnificent! —"Eastern Crandeur,—Aziatic logezery." Everything truly agreeable here—real solid comforts and liberty. Everything doing well again: Lichfield, little quiet Lichfield, part of pit laid into boxes; 67*l.* in a theatre said to hold when crammed, 60*l.* Dined with a Speidellian friend, Dr. Mott: met there another, who thanked me for my hospitality, which I cannot remember, and sent me in his chariot twelve miles on my road, Friday, carriage having gone on. Saw, on entering Derby in a stage coach, a frightful spectacle, eleven hundred men and a hundred women (the latter all dressed in white) in a procession, two and two, attending a funeral, making a mockery of woe, the real purpose of the assemblage being to intimidate the master manufacturers, these people belonging to a trade's-union, and all out of employ, through their own unlawful combination for higher wages.

We were detained a considerable time—the shops all shut, and streets lined with a dense population. The excitement was too great for my purposes, for alarm evidently was felt by the peaceable. I then heard there was a ball at night, where two hundred people were to kick about, therefore I did wonders, after despairing. When I finished, they called from the pit, "Another night!—another night!"

C. Mathews.

To Mrs. Mathews.

York, Feb. 16th, 1834.

Your last letter would have been cheap at five pounds. I don't know, now, why I was so particularly alarmed at not hearing on Thursday night; but I thought I had a right to be if there was no arrival on Friday. Well! I was in a nervous fidget all dinner-time. Belcombe's servant went to the post-office at half-past six, and returned with a newspaper and letter. "Huzza!" said he, "*we* shall benefit by this arrival." They were both from Doncaster.

"This all?"

"Yes, sir."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, sir: they looked very carefully."

Suppose what I felt. Had there been none, I could have borne it better than the two wretched things from Doncaster. I was shaken in a chair to the theatre till I was sick. At ten minutes past seven o'clock, while I was wondering that there was no paper, at all events, in ran a man with—"Postmaster begs pardon, sir; here's a letter." If the audience had but known why I was in such spirits, they would have laughed: and such a letter!—charming!—enough to gladden the heart

* To visit the Earl of Harrington.

of a desponding father. Bless him! I am made more than happy by your description, be assured.

The Belcombes are more than kind. Tell Charles I am as good as he is. I have not been in an inn a long time, and shall not till I get to Nottingham. Everybody is civil, and pets me. All sorts of love are sent to you and him. The Belcombes are as fond of him as any duke or duchess can be. Observe! don't write even No. 1, or one of 2, outside the frank of a newspaper: the Duke of Richmond charges sixteen shillings for it.

I write this second sheet three miles from York, the Doctor having given me a ride, and Fop a run. While he prescribes, I write, as I have no other time. I am going to t' Minster at four, and dine at t' barracks with Lord Arthur Hill at six. Such a splendid day!

My last night will be Leicester, March 3rd, and then I bend homewards.

The Belcombes send back all the combined love of a most loveable family. Do write to Anne.

C. MATHEWS.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Newstead Abbey.

I don't know how to answer the question about "shall you require anything about the Fund to be sent?" If you could hit upon a new thought, I might as well have it a day or two before, though I mean to trust chiefly to chance. A pretty quotation about charity I should like; but a bit of fun above all, if the subject could be joked upon. As to the plaster cast, if Charles does not care about it, I am sure I don't; therefore I fling back the responsibility.

Beauty day!—extensive park—"Hospitalities, look you"—charming! and no grandeur.

Your peremptory "*must* write by return" has occasioned a man and horse to go hence on purpose with this letter. We are three miles and a half from Leicester, and the letters for London were sent before the postman delivered yours. Love to Charley, and "dat's all," but that I am ever affectionately yours, C. M.

101*l.* in two nights at Nottingham, and all the places taken here, or rather there!

To Mrs. Mathews.

Birstall, Leicester, March 3rd, 1834.

The best reason I can give you for not informing you of the time of my return home, was, that I did not, and could not, know it until yesterday. Neither did you desire it of me in your last. I have read it carefully again, and positively there is no such word. Are you answered?

The Fund paid postage, or I should have been in a great rage. A long letter, telling me what I could have told them; who founded the Fund, and how long ago, and a list of the vice-presidents, making a great thick packet, which frightened me. I don't know what to say, or what to do: they have made me miserable; and if I had anticipated it, I would not have attended at all. I don't know, as you say, what Charles could say either, for I should have no time to study six lines.

C. M.

Immediately previous to the day fixed for the Fund dinner, my husband returned home, looking and feeling very unfit for any new exertion. He had something like a horror of the approaching duty imposed upon him, and could resolve upon no stated words for the occasion. On the morning of the day, he became really so ill, that I endeavoured to dissuade him from attending the dinner; but he had so much principle about a promise, that only a state of utter incapacity to leave home could have induced him thus to disappoint, at the eleventh hour, his brethren on a point of business. When he got into the carriage, he had tears in his eyes, at what he knew must be a task—a suffering to him both of mind and body; and, as he declared, he had not the most distant notion of what he could say. However, it was clear one recollection was upon his mind, and upon this he afterwards worked: it was the injurious and illiberal observation of a Mr. Rotch, in the House of Commons, during the last Parliament, that actors were "outcasts of society;" and my husband, with great felicity, took this phrase for part of his theme.

He was received on rising with much cheering, and made the following speech:—

If the noble chairman (said he), in apologizing for the absence of their great patron, had thought it necessary to express his sense of his own want of ability, and his regret that the company had not a better substitute for the illustrious Duke, how much must he (Mr. Mathews) regret the absence of their excellent treasurer, and his own inability adequately to fill his place; for he stood before them in what he would call "an awful position" (a laugh). Yes, he had felt his position awful, and he had put forth a feeler in the first place; and as they had laughed when he wished them, he hoped that they would not laugh when he wished them to be serious (applause). The noble chairman had lamented, as all lamented, the absence of their excellent treasurer, and he had kindly thrown upon him (Mr. Mathews) the task of filling the place of his absent friend. He had often sat in that room upon occasions like the present, and he more regretted the absence of his friend, because he (Mr. Fawcett) used to come there armed with facts and arguments, and with an eloquence which in such a cause was irresistible. He (Mr.

Mathews) had almost suddenly been called upon to stand in his friend's shoes, and he therefore was obliged to say,

> For us and for our charity,
> Thus stooping to your clemency,
> We beg your hearing patiently.

This institution was founded in the year 1765, and there had been at various times since a dispute as to who was the founder. Some said that Mattocks was the founder, others that it was Mr. Hull. There had been a kind of what he (Mr. Mathews) would term an amiable dispute amongst the relatives and admirers of Messrs. Hull, Mattocks, and the celebrated Garrick, with whom the idea of a theatrical fund originated. The Covent Garden institution certainly was founded by the two former. Each claimed the merit of the suggestion; and on application for an Act of Parliament they ran a race for the prize; it was nearly a "dead heat;" but Garrick won by gaining the Act of Parliament before Covent Garden. However, from that year up to the year 1815, the society had been supported by the actors, occasionally assisted by other contributors. The present royal family had long and liberally patronised it. His late Majesty George the Fourth sent a donation of 100*l.* annually. His late Royal Highness the Duke of York not only subscribed, but annually took the chair at their dinners; and upon his lamented death, which was one of the greatest calamities that could happen to this institution, his present Gracious Majesty not only came forward with great warmth, but said that he looked upon his patronage as a duty imposed upon him by his late illustrious brother, from whom it had descended to him as an heir-loom (great applause). When his Majesty was subsequently placed upon the throne, his Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex became their president.

The first idea of a public dinner originated with Mr. Fawcett (hear, hear); but, perhaps that, like the origin of the institution itself, might be matter for an "amiable" dispute (hear, and a laugh). But what gratified him (Mr. Mathews) now was, that he had an opportunity of doing justice to the man who was an honour—he would not say merely to the profession—but to human nature (applause). That man had devoted days and nights, and weeks and years, to promote the interest of that institution and of the profession (great applause). He was the most enthusiastic and warm friend of the institution, and he gave up more of his thoughts to it than, perhaps, to any other subject (hear, hear). Had he (Mr. Mathews) then not said truly that he stood in an awkward position, to take the place of a man who possessed so much eloquence, to which he (Mr. Mathews) had no pretensions? If any one present wanted to ask for himself a favour of a friend, would not his voice falter, and his tongue lose its power? But when any man came before a friend, as the advocate of others, to plead the cause of the unfortunate, then would not the words flow, as it were, spontaneously? Now he stood before them in the latter position; and recollecting that Mr. Fawcett had always filled that situation on former occasions, he

(Mr. Mathews) felt his disadvantage to be like that of a comic actor who was called upon at a short notice to play a tragic part (applause and laughter). He hoped that gentlemen did not come there that evening with the supposition that the object of the institution was only to support people in old age, or otherwise unable to support themselves. It had been the fancy of Mr. Fawcett, that the institution might one day enable actors to retire after a number of years upon "half-pay," and he had lived to see the wish realised. Mr. Hull used to say, that he hoped to live to see the fund amount to 10,000*l.*; but Mr. Fawcett had lived to see that sum trebled (cheers). At this day the society was paying out of the interest of its funded capital annually 900*l.*

There was a notion prevalent that actors were careless and improvident, and that in the course of some few years they ought, every one of them, to save a competence for the remainder of their lives (a laugh). But, with a nominal salary of 6*l.* per week, an actor really received no more than 200*l.* a year, if so much, when those parts of the year in which he was not engaged, and consequently not paid, were deducted (hear, hear). Mr. Emery never had more than 12*l.* a week, and he had a large family to support; and would that society refuse to contribute towards the support of such a man? (hear, hear). He would say that it ought not to be the only object of that society to support those who could not support themselves (hear). It ought to aim at rewarding high merit in its decline (hear, hear). He could name persons who were assisted by this society, and at whose names the heart of every man present would warm (applause). Here he ought not to omit stating, that there were many persons, patrons of the society, who did not honour them with their presence at the annual dinner; amongst them he should mention the Duke of Devonshire, who had that day sent a donation of 100*l.* He was sure that all the patrons of the institution would be glad to hear that the society had an opportunity of assisting many persons of whom they would be sorry to hear it said, that they had come upon the charity. They had not come upon the charity, but they had a claim upon the funds after twenty-one years' subscription (hear, hear). Was there one in that room who would not be gratified to hear that he had contributed towards adding 100*l.* a-year to the means of such persons? Until last year, they had been only able to allow 80*l.* a-year; but this year, the liberality of the patrons had enabled them to increase it to 100*l.* He wanted that society to hold out to young gentlemen of family,—now when all prejudice had vanished from the minds of liberal men,—that they might have a prospect of retiring from the profession upon half-pay (hear, hear).

Various were the causes which had been alleged for the decline of the drama; some said that the theatres were too large; but the late John Kemble once said, when told that the public did not like large theatres, "Sir, the public lie! When I and my sister were burnt out of Drury-lane, we performed at the Opera House, where we drew houses of 700*l.* a night! We then went to the Haymarket, where we never had more than 300*l.*, and the small theatre was never full." He (Mr.

Mathews) had travelled lately round the provinces, and he had seen many attempts to put down the drama. In Sheffield, for instance, there was a clergyman who desired to be informed whenever the players came down there. His clerk used to go to the printing-office, and ask when were the players coming down; "because the parson was going to have a fling at them." After commenting very severely upon the parson's conduct, he said he had read in the papers, but he hoped it was not true, that in a late parliamentary discussion relating to the drama, a member of the Legislature had experienced regret that the time of parliament should have been so much taken up with the case of the "outcasts of society." He (Mr. Mathews) said, honestly, that he never had had any wish to be in the House of Commons (hear, and great laughter); but after he read the speech of the senator to whom he alluded, he almost wished he had been in the senate at the time, that he might have stood up and asked him to his face, would he say that Garrick was an outcast? Would he say that Shakspeare was an outcast of society? But would Shakspeare ever have been the writer which he was if he had not been an actor? (hear, hear). Some even of those fanatics who, at Sheffield and in other places, preached sermons against the drama, quoted Shakspeare from the pulpit, and such was their ignorance, that they did not know they were quoting a dramatic writer (great laughter).

Mr. Mathews then alluded to the writings of Jeremy Collier against the stage, and said, that he was happy they had now a writer upon the drama of the same name, but with very different feelings (applause). Was it not the most scandalous of falsehoods, the most filthy of deceptions, to say that no person could go into a theatre without hearing something to shock the ears of decency? Certainly in plays that were written two hundred years ago, when the manners of the times encouraged licentiousness, they assumed the tone of society; but it was not true of the drama of the present day. The taste of the public itself prevented the use of an indelicate, or even an equivocal expression (hear, hear). He (Mr. Mathews) had not mentioned the Sheffield attacks upon the drama from any feeling of disappointment as regarded himself; for he had attacked the fanatic in his stronghold, and had had the satisfaction of beating him (applause). To those who were now present he need not say, "Are we outcasts?" To those who would say so, he would reply, if they were present, "It is untrue." Was Garrick, the friend of the great and good Dr. Johnson, an outcast? He of whom Johnson said, that "his death had eclipsed the gaiety of the nation, and suspended the most harmless amusement of the people." Here was the opinion of Dr. Johnson, that the drama was "a harmless amusement" (hear, hear). How many of that profession had been raised by their merits to the highest rank, and there had not been amongst them a single instance of deviation from virtue after their elevation. He (Mr. Mathews) would rather be the meanest of these outcasts, than be the man who had called them by that name. He would not call even gipsies "outcasts;" for he had had experience of the honesty of gipsies; and if he should hear that there were some of the tribe who were not

honest, he would not say that the gipsies were outcasts, but that those gipsies were a disgrace to their profession (cheers and great laughter).

It had been said by a great writer, Alexander Pope, that—

Honour and shame from no condition rise:

and, as if he wished to put a pun into his (Mr. Mathews) hand, he added—

Act well your part, there all the honour lies.

It had been said by a noble and learned lord at the table of his late Majesty, when Prince of Wales, that the law was a profession into which no nobleman was ashamed to allow his son to enter. "What obligations," exclaimed Mr. Curran, who was present, "am I then not under to the law, which has enabled me, the son of a poor and lowly peasant, to sit at the table of the Prince of Wales." Well, then, the drama was a profession which raised him (Mr. Mathews), "an outcast," to sit at the table of the Prince of Waterloo (cheers)! Nor did he go there in the character of Punch; and he could add, that he never met the noble Duke in the street without the honour to be acknowledged by him (hear). Mr. Mathews then appealed to the press to vindicate the drama from these unfounded attacks, and he called on the members of the profession to be urged by such calumnies to greater exertions for their distressed brethren. He called upon them to come forward to the aid of the widows and children of those men who had raised the profession to its present respectability, and he trusted that every one of them had a tear for pity, and a hand open as day to melting charity.

Mr. Mathews sat down amidst immense cheering.

CHAPTER XLI.

Offer to Mr. Mathews of a second engagement in America—His reluctance to accept it—His ultimate determination—His performance at Richmond, being his last public appearance in England—Parting interview between Mr. Mathews and Mr. Bannister—Mr. and Mrs. Mathews at Mr. Cartwright's House in the Isle of Wight—Their departure from England in the *Canada*—Valedictory letter from Mr. Theodore Hook—The voyage—The somnambulist—Arrival at New York; the scurrilous placard; Mr. Mathews's performance in New York of his "Trip to America;" its effect on the audience—Mr. Mathews's reception in Philadelphia.

In the spring of 1834, an agent of the American theatres came over, and held forth a brilliant inducement to Mr. Mathews, if he would once more cross the Atlantic. My husband, rather to my surprise, seemed unwilling to listen to any terms. It had been, a few years earlier, his most ardent wish to pay one more visit to that country, if only, as he said, to contradict the aspersions of vulgar and interested malice, which had accused him of ingratitude to the people who had used him so kindly: now, however, he seemed averse even to the thought. I regretted this, and pressed him to make up his mind to this certain mode of retrieving all losses. He looked at me in such a manner as brought tears into my eyes, though I hardly knew why, until he said, "If I go, I shall never behold you or Charles again!" I was silenced; but eventually the offers and temptations of Mr. Maywood prevailed, without any further persuasion from me; and, as soon as I was informed of this, I made known my determination to my husband to go with him. He was much affected at this announcement of the sacrifice I was anxious to make of my home comforts,—and to leave Charles! Mr. Mathews expressed his fears that I could not endure the fatigue and suffering of such a voyage. Indeed, the indulgence I had ever experienced from this best of husbands, who, it might be truly said, had never permitted "the winds of heaven to visit me roughly," had unfitted me for hardship; but I was positive: and well was it for my after reflections that I persisted in my

determination. At the time I had no suspicion that my going would be of more importance to him than that of companionship; but I felt that I could not bear to see him depart without me. I had no forebodings of evil; on the contrary, I augured a happy result to his health from the voyage. He loved the sea, and always felt the better for its influence; and, next to his hoped-for restoration to bodily strength, I could not but rejoice that he had consented to a plan which was calculated to place him independent of future casualties and worldly difficulties, in comfort and repose for the rest of his life.* Ultimately, all was arranged with his partner, Mr. Yates, and every other impediment surmounted.

A few days before quitting London, Mr. Mathews accepted an engagement to perform at Richmond† for one night. He consequently appeared there to a crowded house on the 25th of July; and it is remarkable, that his last appearance in England took place upon the very stage whereon his first essay in public was made in the year 1793.

My husband was excessively anxious to keep our purposed voyage, if possible, a secret until the last minute. His health and spirits were unequal to the task of leave-taking, or the probable remarks that would take place from those ignorant of his circumstances, especially respecting my accompanying him; thus a very few, and those our confidential friends only, knew of the intention from ourselves. But rumour, with her hundred tongues, had somehow got hold of the fact, and Mr. Mathews was assailed by many inquiries from the idle and curious that distressed and annoyed him. It was always inconceivable to him, how persons not supposed to possess the authority to question the affairs and proceedings of their neighbours, could venture to do so, especially when such interference is evidently unwelcome. But this we had so often met with, that wonder had long ceased at such impertinence; and Mr. Mathews, anticipating a recurrence of such liberties, was restless to escape from them on this occasion. To one or two instances, however, of friendly surprise and regret at his going to America, and advice not to go, &c., he was obliged to submit. An interesting scene took place with Mr. Bannister, who entreated us to see him before we went to America; adding, that, if we refused, it would render him truly unhappy. Such an appeal was not to be resisted; and this distressing interview was such an overthrow of my dear

* One year's absence would have done this. † In Surrey.

husband's spirits, that he refused to see every other person who expressed a similar desire. Mr. Bannister had known me from childhood, and my husband for many years; and he declared that he loved us both affectionately; that it was a severe pang at his time of life to take leave of such persons prematurely, as it might be called, for that he was certain he should not live to see us again. He wept most affectingly, and saluting me, while he held his friend's hand in his, after embracing him, his head fell upon my shoulder, and he sobbed so distressingly, that my husband and I were completely subdued. Never shall I forget the benevolent and beautiful features of this aged friend, as he turned, for the last time, his silver head round to look at my husband, whom he thought not to outlive, and truly asserted he should never again behold.*

It was arranged that Mr. Mathews should now proceed, with his servant and luggage, to a friend's house in the Isle of Wight, there to remain until the *Canada* should reach Portsmouth from London, and that Charles and myself should follow him from home when all preparations were completed. He therefore left London for Mr. Cartwright's hospitable roof,† under which my husband and myself passed the last happy days we were destined ever to know in England.

On the 27th of August the *Canada* reached Portsmouth, where we joined it, and took our mournful leave of Charles and our friends.

Previously to our quitting England, the following letter, amongst many others, gratified my husband excessively. The writer had been one of his earliest companions, and the regret which he expressed at parting touched the heart of him whose constant nature clung to old friends and early associations. Contrary to his custom, Mr. Mathews seemed anxious to preserve this letter, which he gave into my hands again, after reading it with great emotion, saying, while his eyes were filled with tears, "Take care of that."

To Mrs. Mathews.

Fulham, Monday.

Dear Mrs. Mathews,—I very much regretted that you were out on Thursday when I called in Russell-street, and very much regretted that I could not dine at the Garrick Club on Tuesday.‡ However, leave-

* Mr. Bannister lived to mourn for his friend.

† East Dene.

‡ The day on which the Garrick Club gave a dinner to Mr. Mathews previous to his leaving England.

taking is an odious ceremony, and so perhaps it is as well as it is. I write to you because I hear that Mat. is gone to the Isle of Wight, and I could not bear that my almost oldest friends—don't be angry—should depart without one word of adieu.

Assure yourselves that, however chequered my life may have been, and however much we have been separated by circumstances, that the early feelings of friendship and attachment are still fresh in my heart; and believe, for you may, that I shall, during your absence, hear of you, even if not from you, with the deepest interest. The next time we meet, if that may ever be (which, as far as I am concerned), I doubt, we shall meet under more agreeable circumstances than we should have met, or rather parted, if you and Mathews had been at home on Thursday. Till the time comes,

Believe me, dear Mrs. Mathews,
Yours and your sincerely attached friend,
THEODORE HOOK.

I publish this letter with great satisfaction, and I am sure the reader will partake of my feeling when I add that it was often referred to and dwelt upon by his friend with much gratification during the residue of his painful life.

The energy of his determined search after future rest seemed to continue with my husband unabated during the voyage. His spirits were at times surprisingly exhilarated, and seldom left him, except when he saw my sufferings, nearly at one time fatal. He was, in fact, the support and dependence of all on board for means of getting through a harassing long voyage without *ennui*. The healthy had full enjoyment of his benevolent exertions, and the sick crawled from their berths, unwilling to lose the delight offered to them.*

One interruption to this general good will occurred. Mr. Mathews was, indeed, a universal favourite in the cabin, in which there was a passenger, an elderly, simple-mannered man, who described himself as having been formerly the master of a vessel, who had saved enough to enjoy ease and independence away from his craft, and was then bound on a visit to a son resident in New York. This person was a devoted admirer of my husband—ever at his side; he really appeared to love him, while he regarded his powers as superhuman. It was suddenly discovered that this person was in the habit of rising from his sleep, dressing himself, drinking his "grog," going upon deck, and retreating to his berth without any consciousness of such acts, which when alluded to the next day he would resolutely discredit, and with

* One of the "treats" he afforded was by reading Mr. Lover's admirable stories of Irish traditions.

something like resentment silence the assertions of those who were witnesses of his proceedings. Mr. Mathews one day finding the old man more than usually earnest in his denial of the facts described, and sorry to see him vexed, turned to his tormentor, and in an under tone begged him to desist, for that Mr. —— was probably a somnambulist. Soon after this the old man was observed to absent himself from the cabin; he would neither eat nor drink there (nor apparently elsewhere); he would not mingle with the mirth he used so much to enjoy—in short, he refused all association and pined in thought. Even his favourite had no influence to draw him from the retired part of the deck where he sat until he could unperceived creep into his berth. At last he became visibly ill, wept frequently, and, in fact, created much interest in my husband's mind as to the cause of his distress Subdued one day, however, by the earnest kindness of Mr. Mathews, and his pressing him upon the origin of the shyness he showed, especially to him, with whom he had been so cordial, the old man confessed that he had overheard Mr. Mathews "call him names," and he had previously conceived such a regard for him that his feelings were proportionably hurt. For some time the accused was at a loss even to guess the meaning of this accusation. He denied the charge, and the old man persisted in it. He "would not," he said, "have believed any reporter, but he had heard him himself." When, where, and to whom had he done this? was the earnest inquiry; and this brought a solution of the mystery. The old man had caught the word "somnambulist," and being totally unacquainted with its import, had fancied it a term of opprobrium, and naturally had felt wounded by it! A laboured explanation followed, which with difficulty reassured the old master that no offence was intended, or stigma cast upon him, by his favourite's remark.

After a six weeks' passage, and much suffering from it, we landed at New York, and from that time, in proportion as I regained health and spirits, Mr. Mathews's drooped, and a physician's aid was deemed necessary, who gave it as his opinion that the transition from one climate to another was alone the cause of the present symptoms, and that once inured to the change all would be well. The poor invalid shook his head; yet, happily for myself, I believed what I hoped.

My husband's progress during our stay in America will, perhaps, be best derived from my letters to Charles.

To Charles J. Mathews, Esq.

New York, September 30th, 1834.
Congress Hotel, Broadway.

Let this assure you that your father and myself are at length arrived in this city, in health and cheerfulness of mind. You may the more rejoice at this intelligence when informed also of the suffering we have experienced for forty days and nights, which terminated yesterday evening in the most glorious sight I ever beheld or could conceive, namely, the Bay of New York. For the first time I lamented that you, my dear Charles, were not with us; for during our passage I reckoned it as the only consolation that you were not a partaker of our misery, —my unbroken, and almost intolerable wretchedness. Assuredly everything we see now before us repays the long arrear of comfort and ease due at the close of our voyage, which I shall not scruple to confess has been worse than can be described. We experienced the most severe gales, storms, and every rigour of weather that might have been expected from a December or January season. In fact, so unfortunate a voyage had never before been experienced by the captain, who had his share of sickness and chagrin, and in vain attempted to hide his anxiety and vexation from his passengers. Your father happily, with the exception of one or two qualms, kept his usual health, although without sleep the greater part of the time.

Well, here all the difficulties, sufferings, and vexations of the cabin are changed to a pleasant, indeed I may call it an elegant room, as large as our own drawing-room. Thus all is reversed, and the bright side of the medal is before us. Everybody seems ready to oblige, and all are glad to see your father.

I have not yet been out, but I am reminded of Paris; the street is as gay as represented in Mr. Burford's Panorama, the ladies as fine. Miss "Clara Fisher" has just passed, in the form of an omnibus, and "Washington Irving" is represented by a similar machine. Mr. Buckstone has just left the room (with a black face), having trimmed the lamps;* so that some English associations are allowed us. There are private cabriolets, too: one has passed this morning with a gentleman seated in the very centre of it. Of course no servant or tiger, because the master leaves no room inside; and, as the entire back of the cab is open, it would be inconvenient if he stood behind it. The droll effect of this it is easy to conceive. One fact will surprise you: the weather, though sunny, is very cold.

New York, October 14, 1834.

Yesterday was "the day, the important day, big with the fate of Cato and of Rome;" simply, it was that of your father's re-appearance upon the American stage.

Since I wrote last, he recovered his health considerably; but yesterday morning his symptoms of performing appeared, and I yielded to his

* A negro resembling Mr. Buckstone, when made up for a Black in "Grace Huntley."

desire to be alone and took a trip to some opposite shore till dinner-time. We went over to the city of New Jersey. Mr. Maywood arrived from Philadelphia the night before to be present on your father's first night. He was apparently ill, and unable to eat any dinner; but when your father went away to the theatre to dress, he revealed to me that his state of mind since his arrival had been most wretched, for that "he found placards posted about New York, of the most abominable nature, inviting hostility towards Mr. Mathews, and that he feared great opposition would be made to his appearing; that a party was to be expected, undoubtedly, and that he had abstained from informing your father of this, lest the knowledge of what he might expect should incapacitate him from meeting the opposition meditated; he would not therefore be prepared for it until he was ready to go upon the stage, when Mr. Simpson* would apprise him of the probability of disapprobation, &c.

I need not tell you how I felt at this intimation; but I was resolved to be present, and near your father, let good or ill befall him. Isidore Guillet arrived, by invitation, to take me to the theatre; and he also seemed full of care, looked paler than usual, and when he found me acquainted with what was threatened, owned that he was also aware of it. He, as well as Mr. Maywood, were very apprehensive that a vulgar mob would "annoy" Mr. Mathews very much at the least, by endeavouring to prevent his performance.

We arrived at the doors of the theatre, which we found clogged up with crowds of people endeavouring to gain admission in vain. It was within five minutes' time of the curtain's rising. The day had been rainy, but it poured in the evening, and here stood more than I can guess the number of, in this wetting weather, striving to enter a place evidently filled. I was full of alarm, for I saw in this extraordinary anxiety all that was to be apprehended. It was impossible for us to think of penetrating this dense mob of pressing people; and had there not been an entrance by the stage door, we must have returned home. When I got behind the scenes, Mr. Simpson met me with a countenance of dismay. "Wished I had not come," but said Mrs. Simpson was in the box to partake of my feelings. I found this dear little creature in dreadful agitation. She declared her fears of the result, and endeavoured to stimulate my courage should the worst be realized—namely, Mr. Mathews not being allowed to perform. We entered the private box, and there, what a house!—not a nook that was not crowded. I looked at the pit, where every night before I had seen the lowest orders of men mixing with the more respectable,† and saw, what appeared to me, all gentlemen. This revived me. I looked at the boxes, and beheld all elegantly-dressed people, such as I had never seen there since my arrival.

Isidore endeavoured to prepare me for the peculiar and startling

* The resident proprietor.

† Females do not go into the pit at New York.

manner which the Americans adopted to express their anger in a theatre; and with a sort of fright unlike any I have before felt, I saw dread preparation for the threatened outrage. After the table and lamps were placed, a dead silence ensued for a minute (my heart died almost in that minute), when the prompter's bell was rung; and before the curtain could begin to obey this announcement of the actor's readiness, a burst of the most stunning applauses I ever heard put all my fears aside. The curtain then rose, your father walked on sternly, but as pale as death, and was met with such plaudits and cheerings as can be scarcely imagined. He was like the traveller who refused to yield his bosom to the rude assault of the cutting wind, but who instantly threw aside his cloak to the kindly beams of the sun. He was prepared for violence, but the warmth of what seemed almost affection, so overset his firmness, that I was afraid he would not recover it sufficiently to fulfil his task.

In his address it was requisite that he should touch upon his expected repulse, the injustice of which he was bent on proving, by his purposed performance of his "Trip to America" during his engagement. He really spoke well, and was frequently interrupted by the most vehement general applause and acclamations. The pit rose to a man; and, waving their hats, gave three cheers. He then commenced his performance, and nowhere has it been more judiciously appreciated, or more joyously and attentively listened to, for the audience waived the general custom of leaving their seats (usual even in the boxes) between every act; during the whole night not one person moved. "Monsieur Tonson" succeeded the two Table-acts, and was equally well received, and, when over, your father was called for. After a short resistance he came forward, reiterated his thanks, &c., and the audience left the house. Whether those who came to scoff remained to applaud, is not ascertained; but as no hostile effect appeared, from first to last, it is fair and charitable to suppose that the enemy had repented his "foul intent," and withdrawn it altogether.

You will be glad to hear that your father never played better or stronger: he even danced, gratuitously, I may say, in the last scene of "Morbleu," so little did he feel his lameness. During the evening, it appears, "the weak invention of the enemy" was successfully peeled off the walls of the rival theatre. I give you the benefit of a copy:—

"NOTICE.

"We understand Charles Mathews is to play on Monday evening, the 13th instant. The scoundrel ought to be pelted from an American stage, after his writing that book which he did about six years ago, called 'Mathews's Caricature on America.' This insult upon Americans ought to meet with the contempt it deserves. After using the most vile language against the 'too easily duped Yankees,' as he calls us, he thinks thus to repay us for our kindness towards him. But we hope they will show him that we are not so easily duped this time as we were then, and drive the ungrateful slanderer from our stage for ever."

Thus ends, without printer's name, this precious *morceau*, worthy of a place in our book.

The few we know here have been with us to-day to talk over and congratulate us upon this extraordinary turn to the affair. Your father is quite well, and in high good humour: the sun shines brightly, and all is in keeping with his triumphant success.

I send you the newspaper accounts of the night, which are accurate and consistent. A. M.

"Long before the rising of the curtain, every part of the house was literally crammed. A belief generally prevailed that a determined and systematic opposition to Mr. Mathews had been formed, to prevent his re-appearance on the American stage, in consequence of a report that he had, after his return to London from the United States, ridiculed our national character and reviled our institutions. Placards of a most violent and inflammatory description, calculated to enlist the worst feelings of the community against him, were industriously circulated in the course of the day, and a stormy night at the Park Theatre was generally anticipated. Our expectations, we are happy to say, were very agreeably disappointed. A most tremendous shout greeted him, and the plaudits and clapping, and stamping and cheering, and throwing up of hats in the pit drowned everything for some seconds. Not a solitary hiss was heard. Mr. Mathews, placing himself behind his table, continued bowing and bowing, deeply affected. Silence being obtained, he addressed the audience in a strain of eloquence. He sincerely thanked them for their warm and generous reception of him, and asked, was it possible, if he was guilty, that he would have thus come here to face them?—No. 'I am not acting now,' said Mr. Mathews, with great feeling, which had an electric effect. The most tremendous applause followed this speech, and and the play proceeded.

"It is unnecessary to say, that his rich acting was the same rich treat of exquisite humour, under a succession of remarkable, some of them almost supernatural, transformations—more perfect even than when here before. His voice, perhaps, is not quite so vigorous. The Police Court, and the old Epicure in bed, were admirable; also his Monsieur Tonson. After the latter he was called out, and repeated what he had said on his first entrance, adding, that, to prove that he had not done injustice, or been ungrateful to us, he would, with their permission, take occasion hereafter to enact before them his whole 'Trip to America,' *verbatim et literatim*, and abide the issue of their verdict.

"Mr. Mathews appears to-night in his far-famed and much-discoursed-of 'Trip to America.' It was this piece in which he was said to have perpetrated those awful and unpardonable slanders upon our nation, its manners, character, and institutions. The New York audience who have consented, in spite of these terrible calumnies, to be amused by Mr. Mathews's unequalled performances, will now be able to judge for themselves of the enormity of his guilt towards our countrymen. We

were very proud of the high feeling and intelligence manifested by the audience on the first night of his appearance, when, fully believing all that was charged against Mr. Mathews, they went in vast numbers, not merely to hear him courteously, but resolved to suppress any opposition. The calumny most undeniably was started by some personal enemy to Mr. Mathews,—some Englishman, who strove to wreak his spite through the agency of our prejudices and credulity. The fool was mistaken; we are above such things, and could not be made his tools. Mathews has done no more for us than he did for his countrymen, and they laughed, as we did, at their own caricatures. We are assured that the piece will be given exactly as it was in London."

To Charles J. Mathews, Esq.

Broome-street, New York, Oct. 30th, 1834.

You will see by the above address that we have quitted the hotel we were at; in fact, we were turned out, the master of it having been compelled to sell up, and not apprising us of his situation until a few days before. We (that is, I and Mr. John Mason, Charles Kemble's nephew) walked about the streets, morning, noon and night, in search of some habitation, in vain! It is hardly comprehensible to a person in England that two people, in such a city as New York, could, with money to pay for it, be without shelter in any house of entertainment; but, as there are no lodging-houses here, and all the boarding-houses and hotels were full, we found ourselves, after the most persevering and strenuous efforts, on a Friday evening destitute of a place to receive us on the following morning, when all our hotel furniture was to be removed and servants discharged!

In this really alarming dilemma Mr. and Mrs. Simpson proposed to "do their best," and take us into their house. We had no alternative, and in spite of the manifest inconvenience they must undergo, we came in here with all our baggage a fortnight ago, and everything that old and dear friends might have been expected to do to make us comfortable and happy has been done by these amiable persons.

Your father has played his "Trip to America" twice. The first night was an anxious one, as you may imagine, but the same determined spirit sustained him throughout, as was so remarkably displayed on his first appearance. One "ill-natured fellow in the pit"* tried to be heard; but his attempt was drowned in the ocean of general approbation and good humour, and he gave up the effort. Your father's benefit comes on to-morrow night, the last of his engagement, and we then proceed to Philadelphia.

If I have less amusement for you than you expected, you must place the failure to my cold, our removal, and the bustle and anxiety of your father's professional affairs—harassing I will confess them to have

* A dramatic fallacy; it being common for an unsuccessful actor or author to fancy that the opposition proceeds only from one person in the pit.

been—but the worst is over, I trust, and we shall enter Philadelphia with renewed hope and health. I think your father's indisposition was chiefly nervous; but a physician whom I persuaded him to call in the second week after we arrived, and who went away without writing a prescription, confessed to us the day before yesterday, that when we entered New York the cholera was fearfully prevalent, but every care was taken to conceal the fact; and that though your father had no part of the disorder, nevertheless he felt what all previously healthy strangers felt, and I might also have experienced a similar feeling, had I not been so very ill just before I entered New York. The disease has disappeared since the colder weather, for it is consistently cold now, though brightly sunny; I can, however, understand now why this climate is so trying to strangers. It is neither the cold of winter nor the heat of summer that injures the constitution of a European, however rigorous both of these may be, but it is the transitions, the changeableness of the weather—one day muslin and lace too much to bear, and the next, flannels and furs insufficient to keep out the severity of the cold. These extremes I have felt already, but the Indian summer is commencing, and I understand that the weather then is not so variable as any other; not warm, of course, but unclouded and dry.

When I began this letter I did not mean to dwell upon the subject of the partial opposition endeavoured to be got up by the few who were enemies to the theatre, as well as to your father, because I felt it difficult to make you understand how he triumphed; but as the scraps from the newspapers will in some part give you intelligence, I shall briefly add, that "The Trip to America" was followed by an appeal by your father to the house, to pronounce whether he was guilty of the charge of abusing the Americans in it, or not guilty? In answer to this, all the pit, and I may say, every gentleman in the theatre rose, and in a thunder of voices, simultaneously shouted "Not Guilty."

It was a curious result in a theatre. Much excitement, and, indeed, harass of spirits may be imagined by you out of all this, but I do not attempt to withhold the truth: having told you everything, you would at once conceive every consequence, your father's agitation, &c. It is over now, and there is no harm therefore in this confession. To-night he takes his benefit, and completes this engagement.

We are inundated by gentlemen-beggars of all sorts. Not a day but some disappointed Englishman applies for money; all want to go back to their own country, and all, need I say it? require your father to pay their passage home. If he had answered every demand of this sort, all his profits would have been disposed of.

Your father was shocked, on his first day's abode in Broadway, to find that the "Omnibus nuisance" was threefold what he experienced in London. He, to my amazement, appeared as much a stranger here as myself: everything was as new to him as if he had never been in the country before; not because it was much altered, but because he had ceased to remember anything; and he verified the remark completely, that nothing is more new than that which has been forgotten.

One thing he witnessed which much surprised him,—a trotting-match between two horses in harness, at the rate of twenty-two miles an hour, in three two-mile heats. I suppose this is interesting to every horseman, and so I mention it for your especial wonder.

Fop—I have never yet mentioned Fop, I believe. He is at this time well and happy; but he detested the ship, and the sailors, and all nautical sounds. He is immensely admired here by all ranks; and as he is unique, he is considered and looked at as a *lusus naturæ* by all untravelled Americans.

The following address I prepared for your father, he being too anxious and agitated to write anything himself, or to trust to his nerves at the last moment for appropriate words. He spoke it with good effect previously to the commencement of his "Trip to America."

"Ladies and Gentlemen,—The moment long promised to myself is arrived, and I am about to place before you, in my entertainment called the 'Trip to America,' in 1823, the very head and front of my (supposed) offence, when I presumed to use this country, as I have so many others, for the purposes of good-humoured mirth and amusement.

"It has been insinuated, maliciously, I will say, that I have in this instance misemployed my humble talents in misrepresenting and abusing a country which, in fact, I quitted with the warmest feelings of esteem and gratitude. This evening's trial, I hope, will release me from the charge; and as I shall, in my performance, nothing extenuate, nor set down aught unsaid in England eleven years ago, when first this entertainment was given to the public, I trust your candour will give me a patient judgment, and form your decision.

"For a period of fifteen years, during which time these peculiar performances have been before the public, I never recollect, except in this instance, having been charged with using my small powers for the purposes of mere ridicule or personal pique. My aim has been to please; my interest, had my disposition been otherwise, prompted me to avoid giving offence and making enemies. My sketches are strictly those of manners; and as amusement is positively required of me, I naturally and necessarily seize upon those prominences of character most likely to afford it. In my several delineations of the English, Scotch, Irish, Welsh, and French, I have unhesitatingly delivered to them upon their own ground, their respective peculiarities and manners, and have never, in a single instance, given offence. As I dealt with them, so I dealt with America: what I found a source of innocent amusement, I certainly made use of; but I never intentionally, or with knowledge, touched upon individual feeling with ill-nature or a desire to wound; and, least of all, could I deliberately put forth any matter so grossly contradictory to my known sentiments of America, as that insinuated by persons evidently as indisposed to truth as, in this particular case, they were ignorant of it.

"Ladies and Gentlemen,—I will briefly add, that my reliance is on your kind and patient hearing, and at the most, if I offend, that you will believe I do it unconsciously."

The performance proceeded with general approbation; and at its conclusion all present were fully satisfied that the nature of the piece had been misrepresented, and that it really contained nothing whatever offensive to the American people. Your father then addressed the house, and said:—"Ladies and gentlemen: I have redeemed my pledge. I assured you I would deliver the entertainment called the 'Trip to America,' *verbatim et literatim;* I solemnly declare I have not omitted one line, excepting descriptions of localities; such as the distance between one city and another, &c. which would have occupied time without being amusing. I made use accidentally of the expression,—'I will put myself on my trial.' I have been fairly judged. Now, gentlemen of the jury, what say you, 'Guilty or not guilty,' of having libelled or ridiculed you?'—'Not guilty!' shouted the whole pit; and he withdrew amidst cheers from all parts of the house.

A. M.

After this agitation had so happily terminated, and his attraction proved unabated, something like convalescence appeared, at least good spirits, which (constituted as he was) always bore the name of good health; and in a short letter to Charles, enclosing a bill of exchange, he wrote, elated with the result:—"I have only time to say that all's well! My ninth and last night—first engagement. I have finished as I began, with glory. The enclosure, as Inkle says, is 'no bad specimen of savage elegance.' Pay it into Cockburn's directly. Love Captain Britton for my sake. Pay him what attention you can afford."*

To Charles J. Mathews, Esq.

Philadelphia, November 14, 1834.

My dear Charles,—Your father opened here on Monday night to an immense and enthusiastic audience, unmixed with any idea of anger against him, like that dreaded at New York; and to-night he is performing for the third time. His success is now certain here and elsewhere. He is gone to the theatre in better health and spirits than on any preceding night,—for he has not been quite well since he landed in America. Though he has persevered in performing on the appointed nights, he has not always been fit for so much exertion; nor will he, I believe, be able to fulfil his original hopes and intentions by working often enough, to render that advantage from his coming which he could derive from more frequent performances. He is not ill, observe,—but he is not well. The climate has not agreed with him; his spirits are not good; yet there is no fear of anything worse befalling him than the realization of less money than he calculated upon, had he the strength to work for it. If the climate continue thus to affect him, I shall encourage his return in the spring; that is, so as to be in England

* The captain of the *Canada*, in which we sailed to America. For this gentleman Mr. Mathews conceived a great partiality.

before the autumn. What he will receive will be worth coming for; and if not as much as we hoped, we must all, nevertheless, be satisfied; but I cannot allow him to do more than seems consistent with his perfect safety, let what will befall. Those who love him will not wish it; and for those who do not, why, what are they to us where your father's health is at stake?*

It is extraordinary how quickly the weeks slide on; although we have little to record, yet we have much to occupy us. I never read, visit little, and still I am never at leisure.

Philadelphia is a city quite of another character, yet equally to be liked with New York. Its white marble and dove-coloured marble would, I think, vie with Italy. Indeed, you would see much in the public buildings here to admire and praise. The weather is lovely, warm, and sunny. They call November their Indian summer.

A. M.

* It will easily be understood that it was a difficult and painful task to write the truth, and yet not seriously afflict Charles, hope still supporting me and promising a happy change.

CHAPTER XLII.

Dinner at Philadelphia in compliment to Mr. Sheridan Knowles—Mr. Mathews's speech on that occasion—Letters to Mr. C. J. Mathews; Mr. Trelawney; Illness of Mr. Mathews, and probability of his premature return to England; reception of Mr. Mathews at Boston—The Scots' Charitable Society of Boston—Letter from Mrs. Pierce Butler to Mr. Mathews; information touching the Canadas—Letter from Mr. Mathews to his son—Letters from Mrs. Mathews to Mr. C. J. Mathews; preaching of Dr. Wainwright—Fop and his impudent claimant.

On our arrival at Philadelphia, a dinner in compliment to Mr. Sheridan Knowles as a dramatist was in anticipation, and Mr. Mathews was invited to it by Mr. Pierce Butler and other leading persons on the occasion.

In the course of this dinner, Mr. Richard Penn Smith, one of the vice-presidents, having been called upon by the president for a toast, rose and said:—

Mr. President,—It has been remarked that he who made two blades of grass grow where but one grew before, is an important benefactor of mankind,—and so he is: but, permit me, sir, to add to this just observation, that he who has taken one wrinkle from the brow where the hand of care may have planted two, is, in my judgment, a benefactor of a much higher order. With these brief remarks I will propose the health of a gentleman, distinguished both abroad and "at home" as one of the highest ornaments of his profession—I drink the health of Charles Mathews, the first comedian of the age.

This sentiment was received with great enthusiasm by the whole company. When the lively expressions of applause had subsided, Mr. Mathews said:—

Gentlemen,—I am taken by surprise, and must confess that I am therefore unprepared to acknowledge, in a manner adequate to the occasion, those feelings which now really almost overpower me, for the honour of your invitation, and the kind, flattering manner in which you have drunk my health. I had believed this day to have been devoted to one particular object, and I am therefore convinced that you neither expect nor wish me to occupy your time by addressing you at

length. As I am more famed for delivering the matter of others than my own, I shall parody a speech of the celebrated French tragedian, Talma, when a farewell dinner was given to John Philip Kemble, upon his retirement from the stage, and, with your permission, in his manner:—"On a day consecrated to my dear friend {Kemble, / Knowles,} it will not be expected dat I should be lisen to vid interest, more particulière as I am not capable to express in your language vat I feel; but ven de tongue cannot speak, de heart most, and I tank you from de bottom of dat heart for dis honour."—Proud and happy am I, indeed, to witness a day consecrated to my illustrious countryman;—I say countryman, for he is a Briton—and Irish, English, and Scotch, are of the same country, and long may they continue brothers! It is indeed gratifying to find so many enthusiastic friends to the drama on this side of the Atlantic. This is a cheering sight: this meeting does equal honour to those who give and him who receives. It is calculated to elevate the drama in the eyes of its enemies, and I cannot but proudly feel that a part of the compliment is paid to my profession. I have the gratification of being able to boast that I am a contemporary of James Sheridan Knowles; and I share in common with him the delight of witnessing our art upheld by such an assemblage. One thing I selfishly rejoice in,—which is, that your kind invitation has given me an opportunity of an explanation which otherwise would not have been afforded me. Certain calumnies have been circulated against me. It has been asserted in print, that I have caricatured,—libelled,—ridiculed this country: it is false! Your talented guest of this day can vouch for the consistency of my expressions of gratitude.

Mr. Knowles bore testimony to the warm and generous terms in which his friend Mathews had invariably spoken of America on the other side the Atlantic; and alluded to the astonishment with which he had heard of rumours attempted to be circulated prejudicial to the distinguished comedian, knowing, as he had every opportunity of knowing, the admiration which Mr. Mathews always expressed towards the citizens of this country.

Mr. Mathews himself, who was an invited guest, and largely contributed to the conviviality of the evening, satisfied the company of the gross injustice that had been done him, and of the utter absurdity of supposing him capable of speaking disrespectfully of a people to whom he is under so many obligations, and for whom he had always felt and expressed the highest admiration.*

To Charles J. Mathews, Esq.

Philadelphia, December 3, 1834.

We are in the habit of seeing Mr. Trelawney (Lord Byron's Trelawney, and, moreover, your friend Sir William Molesworth's cousin), and think him a most agreeable and clever man. He has dined, supped,

* Philadelphia paper.

walked, &c., with us; recollects and talks of you; and, in fact, is a sparkling jewel in our way, picked up in this huge mine of dulness.

I shall, when I next address you, be better able to form an idea of the probable plan which your father's health and experience may find it expedient to determine upon. Boston may agree with him better than these warmer places, and reinstate him sufficiently to allow of his making other engagements, which I pray Heaven he may be able to do. But the transitions of weather are really more surprising than I could believe: frost and snow one day; the next, summer, and the heat insupportable.

But I am well, thank God! and doubly thankful for being so, as it renders your father's indisposition more tolerable to him than it would otherwise be. Fop is also in good health, and fresher in intellect than ever: indeed, he is a most sensible and desirable friend here. He made his first appearance in America a few nights ago, and repeats the character of *Dragon* in the "Lone House" to-night! His performance was perfect, and met with universal approval. Mrs. Pierce Butler was enchanted with his acting, and she is a judge, and Mr. Trelawney thought him excessively good. Your father is just come home: his benefit was very great.

Tremont Hotel, Boston, December 7, 1834.

I meant to finish this letter during a day's stay at New York, we having intended to halt there Friday night, and resume our journey to this place yesterday evening. Instead of this, finding that no packet sailed until Monday, we were obliged to proceed from New York, merely quitting one vessel for another, with scarcely time to effect the removal of luggage: we therefore arrived here last night. Your father wishes me to apprize you of the possibility, nay, probability, of our return to England by the middle of February. This will surprise, and, I fear, alarm you. But it need not; for though your father has not been well here, I am satisfied that the climate of England would speedily set all to rights. He is affected, certainly, by climate chiefly, and Dr. Pattison thinks so, too. The fuel disagrees with him; the food, and manner of dressing it; the transitions of weather, &c. In short, Boston is to decide everything: if he is not better here, it will be useless to remain; since he is not capable of going through his work, and it is distressing to me to see him attempt it.

I only went one night at Philadelphia to see him, and it made me ill to perceive how great an effort it was to him to get through. He is always breaking into the most profuse perspirations, even on the coldest day: his skin is yellow, and he has fits of wheezing and difficulty of breathing, which deprive him of speech for a time, and alarm me (for the time) exceedingly, although I am assured, both by observation and experience, that these attacks are not dangerous. He is lethargic, too, and, at the best, in low spirits.

The medical men say that the country affects him, and will continue to do so, they think, as in every respect, except the wheezing (which he had sometimes in England), his indisposition is such as most

strangers feel in America. In short, if Boston does not tend to improve him, we must return to England; and if *I* feel it right he should do so, I am convinced you will be satisfied that it is necessary. Yet, believe me, there is nothing serious in his complaint—nothing to alarm; and were he a private man, he might remain and not suffer materially; but it is when his time for exertion arrives that he feels his illness, and almost incapacity to perform. His success is great, and he is required to renew his engagements at New York and Philadelphia. Every manager in America is pressing him to go to them, but he must positively give up the scheme, unless, as I have said, his health returns.

Now, my dearest Charles, do not for a moment suspect that I tell you anything but the truth, nor imagine that I would deceive you. It is a sad disappointment—that is, it will be—to return with our object only in part accomplished, but it cannot be helped. Nevertheless, make up your mind to the event, which may be averted by the time you receive this letter; and you need not be told that my wishes are to remain, if we can do so without danger to your father.

He desires me to say, that under the impression that he will be obliged to return, it will be expedient that you inform Mr. Yates of the probability of his doing his "At Home" at the usual time at the Adelphi; and he wishes you to see Mr. Peake immediately, for the purpose of asking him whether he will undertake, in concert with you as formerly, to get ready an entertainment for the forthcoming season. If so, you may both go to work, to have study ready for him without loss of time.

I am well. Heaven seems, in its goodness, to have strengthened me in proportion to the necessity I have found for exertion. Your father declares that my coming has saved his life; for that he could never have borne his depressing sensations, or kept up, had I not been present to cheer and assist him. This is consoling and satisfactory.

And now I must tell you that I have had a drive to-day, and think Boston a charming place. Philadelphia is a very clean and pleasing city, but formal as a draught-board, which it resembles in plan, and is almost as lifeless. Boston is as clean, as bright, but more lively and matured than this or any other place I have seen in America. We are more comfortable in our inn than we have found ourselves elsewhere; and, indeed, I cannot help reckoning upon your father's improvement under these improving circumstances. Boston, everybody says, is more English than any other place, in its manners and ideas. Prepare to expect us (that is, prepare your thoughts); but be not quite assured until I write again.

A. M.

Boston, December 18, 1834.

Your father has appeared at Boston on the 10th, and I should earlier have apprized you of his gratifying reception from a great house, but that this pleasing event had an alloy from his being seized with a hoarseness the next day, which has precluded a second appearance up to this time, to the general regret of wife, manager, and the public. Last

night, however, his voice burst from the "palpable obscure" of the last seven days into clearness. To-day promises a complete dissolution of the ice-bound matter, which, like Munchausen's frozen horn, will, I trust, next Monday, come to a complete thaw of words before a warm and genial audience.

It is hard to see a heap of shining gold lying ready to be taken up, and to have one's hand held back just as it is opened to grasp the treasure. But though this is to be deplored, I do not allow myself to be quite cast down, and I hope you will not entertain any desponding feelings; for though the extent of our expectations cannot be realized, yet much more will be effected than the same period in England could have given. The climate must be blamed; it disagrees with your father. The physicians of the three cities refuse to prescribe for him, and recommend his return to his native air. Your father tells me that he suffered in a like manner here formerly; but, doubtless, his being then eleven years younger, rendered his sensations less distressing in this respect. He is much better to-day, and I trust he may be able to proceed with this engagement, which promises so well; after which, if he be able, he will enter into another at New York; but he is advised not to wander far from the ports, where, if he become worse, he can every week find a vessel ready to sail for Liverpool. As to his taking journeys thousands of miles from place to place—to say nothing of the fatigue and hardship (for such, in truth, it is) of travelling in the "new country," where literally

> "All is uneven,
> And everything is left at six and seven,"

it is out of the question. Any gain away from the great cities is not to be sought for under his uncertain state of health, and the dismal intervening distances.

Now, my dearest Charles, I entreat you to be prompt and diligent respecting your father's intimation of a probable necessity for an entertainment next year at the Adelphi; for, though we shall cling as long as possible to this country, yet I would have you consider our speedy return probable, and to expect in every future letter an announcement of the time.

The weather here last Sunday was twelve degrees below zero, yesterday five, and to-day it is twenty-eight above zero; so you see what fluctuations we are subject to. This city is superior, as far as I can judge, to the others in its comforts, its habits, and its people. I have received more attention, and therefore perhaps am more favourably impressed. A very charming woman, a person of fortune and the best connexions, has really behaved like an old friend: she is a sweet, mild being, the widow of the gentleman whose carriage carried your father that journey, when he met with the little landlord, whom you will remember in the "American Trip." Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Eliot were with him there on that occasion. She is the image of Lady Beresford, and quite English in her language, intonation, and manner; so that I am happier in Boston than I have yet been.

Your father has been three months in this country, and has only performed nineteen nights. The managers have all been distressed exceedingly by these interruptions, and play to empty houses while he lies by: the people and their dollars lying by also for your father's re-appearance.

ANNE MATHEWS.

To Charles Mathews, Esq.

Boston, Dec. 20th, 1834.

DEAR SIR,—We, the undersigned, at the particular request of the Managers, Members, &c., of the Scots' Charitable Society of Boston, Mass., are deputed to present unto you this certificate as an Honorary Member of their very honourable and ancient Institution, in testimony of your liberal donation of fifty dollars, received through the hands of Messrs. Ben^m. Russell and James A. Dickens, as desired by you.

In performing this pleasant duty, may we be permitted to communicate to you the feelings of those we represent: that your success abroad as well as "at home," may be equal to the benevolence of your exalted and talented mind.

We have the honour to be, very respectfully, your obedient servants,

JAMES KETT,
JAMES CRIGHTON.

The donation above alluded to was left by my husband when he quitted Boston in 1823. It is rare to find an obligation of this kind outlive the time, and I insert it as honourable to the source whence it came. However, this society is composed of Scotsmen, and that partly accounts for the result. This long memory of a boon my husband prized the more, because it added another reason for his love of the Scottish nation. Several other flattering tributes of recollection were given during our stay, equally gratifying to Mr. Mathews's feelings.

The following letter from Mrs. Pierce Butler* was solicited, not only for the information it contains, but as an addition to my husband's collection of autographs:—

To Charles Mathews, Esq.

Philadelphia, Sunday, Dec. 21st, 1834.

MY DEAR SIR,—I learned with much regret that you are still suffering from indisposition, though I am happy to find that it is not aggravated by quite so many inconveniences and annoyances as you had to endure in the course of your visit to Philadelphia. The pleasure I derived from hearing of the greater comfort of your surroundings, and hospitality of the people among whom you are at present residing, was

* Formerly Miss Fanny Kemble.

partly owing to the confirmation which your account gave to a previous opinion I had entertained, that the New England folk are far more like the Old England folk than any other set of people in "these United States." It was a source of great mortification to me to be unable to offer either to yourself or Mrs. Mathews any civility but that barrenest of all social ceremonies, a morning call: however, I could not help myself. Had I had a roof of my own over my head, I hope it would have been otherwise; but as it was, I placed my situation, during your visit here, down on that long account of inevitable vexations which, as we grow older seems to grow longer, as our patience and power of endurance wax stronger.

You ask me for information about the Canadas; I rather hope that is only an indirect way of getting at my abominable handwriting, which I know you desire to have. I hope so, because the information that I can give you will, I fear, prove of very little use to you. We went there, I believe, upon the same terms as everywhere else, *i.e.*, division of profits. Vincent de Camp* had the theatres there, and (truth is truth) of all the horrible strolling concerns I ever could imagine, his company, and scenery, and gettings up, were the worst. He has not got those theatres now, I believe; but they are generally opened only for a short time, and by persons as little capable of bringing forward decent dramatic representations as he, poor fellow! was.

You are, however, so much less dependent upon others than we were for success, that this might prove a slighter inconvenience in your instance. Heaven knows the company would have been blackguardly representatives of the gentry in Tom and Jerry: you can fancy what they were in heroicals. Our houses were good; so, I think, yours would be: but, though I am sure you would not have to complain of want of hospitality, either in Montreal or Quebec, the unspeakable dirt and discomfort of the inns, the misery of the accommodations, the scarcity of eatables, and the abundance of eaters (fleas, bugs, &c.) together with the wicked dislocating road from St. John's to La Prairie, would, I fear, make up a sum of suffering, for which it would be difficult, in my opinion, to find an adequate compensation. In the summer time, the beauty of the scenery going down the St. Lawrence to Montreal, and of the whole country round Quebec, might in some measure counterbalance the above evils. But, unless Mrs. Mathews's and your own health were tolerably good at the time, the daily and hourly inconveniences which you would have to endure, would, in my opinion, render an expedition to the Canadas anything but desirable. The heat, while we were in Montreal, was intolerable—the filth intolerable—the flies intolerable—the bugs intolerable—the people intolerable—the jargon they speak intolerable. I lifted up my hands in thankfulness when I set foot again in "these United States." The only inn existing in Montreal was burnt down three years ago, and everything you ask for was burnt down in it. Pray remember me to Mrs.

* Mrs. Butler's uncle.

Mathews. I am glad she likes Boston: I am very fond of it. I have been very happy there, and like the place and people infinitely.

I am, my dear sir, very truly yours, FANNY KEMBLE.

I sign thus because I was told you wish to have my unmarried name. Trelawny is quite recovered.

On the 29th of December Mr. Mathews (unknown to me) addressed a private letter to Charles from Boston, in which the following forcible and affecting observations on his own state of health and feelings occur:—

"This will not do. I must come back—I am blighted. I cannot work. I have been eleven days confined here. Siberian weather has set in. Thermometer 10 degrees—sometimes more—below zero, and I jumping from a sick room to a stage, surrounded with blasts (not draughts) of wind. A rhinoceros could not endure it. All the illness of my fifty-eight years of life added up is not equal to the number of days I have been ill here. Forty days' perfect health at sea, succeeded by instantaneous effects of miasma on landing. Your mother the exact reverse—sick forty days, in better health than I have known her for years. From 29th September I have acted in all twenty-two nights. Back I must go, and directly, if I am not dissuaded from fear of bad weather. I play six nights more at New York, and think of returning on the 16th of February. I have done all I can (say to D.) to pay him. God bless you, my dear fellow.

Your affectionate father, C. M.

To Charles J. Mathews, Esq.

Jan. 4th, 1835. Boston, Massachusetts.

MY DEAREST CHARLES,—I hope you have made up your mind to the inevitable result of our premature return home. To-morrow will be your father's last theatrical night here (his benefit); and when he has done his entertainment in a room, to enable certain scrupulous Christians and Unitarians, who, like Mawworm, think it "a sin to keep a shop," to patronize him, we go again to New York, where, after he has played six nights, unless something very unexpected offers, and your father's health improves, we positively sail for Liverpool, where, all things agreeing, he will perform. But, as hope is still at the bottom of my Pandora's box, other plans may be formed, and strength given for their execution. Therefore say nothing to any but parties concerned of our probable return, until my decisive letter, which I shall write from New York, as soon as all is settled, giving you notice when and where to join us on our arrival in England, where I have happiness awaiting me in your greeting, my beloved Charles, enough to repay any sacrifice past, and to stimulate me to bear all future trials, whatever they may be.

I must now tell you that I have been more happy in Boston than I have felt anywhere since I parted from you. Even your father's illness, &c., has been soothed by the attentions and friendship we have found in this place—I especially. A dear woman, one of the highest grade here, a widow, whom I believe I mentioned to you, has been an affectionate and devoted friend, never omitting a day seeing us and showing us every kindness. She has introduced us to her family and numerous friends, and done everything that she possibly could to render us happy, and has so endeared herself to me, that I shall suffer a severe pang when I say farewell to her. Indeed I like this city also very much. Boston is decidedly the England of America.

Your father bids me tell you that Fop is admired everywhere, and by everybody. He is indeed handsomer and cleverer than ever. A few days ago some gentlemen on the road (strangers) offered to "exchange two pointer dogs (animals of great worth here), with an addition of fifty dollars," for him! But Fop, whom you know is a "family dog," was inflexible, and the strangers drove off, convinced that he would not take any money for himself. Questions are frequently asked about him, such as "where he was raised?" which of course does not make him think little of himself. A. M.

To the above Mr. Mathews added a few lines, by way of postscript, in further expression of his feelings and situation:—

I should have sent 1000*l.* but for this calamitous week. "Destiny," —fate—fatality—call it what you like, pursues me. I CANNOT, MUST not, get beyond a certain point. The worst description of ill luck overwhelms me. Every seat was taken in the Boston Theatre, when I totally lost my voice: nine days in one room. On my recovery, the winter had commenced. I cannot describe it to a European. You have never seen anything like it: twenty degrees below zero at night—ten daytime; houses warmed up to 90—cold stage at night; no chance of a partial thaw till March. Thank God, —— cannot reproach me. If I was not in his debt, I would not endure what I do here. C. M.

Notwithstanding my husband's general state of suffering, and utter inability to shake off his depression, he was able for a few hours to make the most gigantic efforts to overcome both. On the stage, for instance, for which he would prepare with tearful eyes and painful frame, his audience never felt that they were extracting amusement from a sufferer. Occasionally he would dine out with a very kind friend, Mr. Manners (the English Consul), whom we had known many years before in England, and others, and never allowed his ill health to be guessed at, farther than his altered looks betrayed it. He was so attached to Mrs. Eliot and her children, that with them he felt at home and often cheerful. He even did not object to meet parties at her house, as well as at Mr. Augustus Thorndike's, to whom we

were indebted for many valued attentions. At these parties we became acquainted with Dr. Wainwright, whom, as the customs of America would not allow a churchman to visit a theatre, Mr. Mathews took great pleasure in entertaining whenever they met.

The preaching of Dr. Wainwright, as well as his reading of the service, was most impressive and beautiful. His harmonious voice, perfect English, untainted with any local intonation or vulgarism, his benign countenance, and fine mind rendered him very popular, especially with Europeans; and my husband, ill as he was, never omitted to attend service when he could possibly go out. To show how strong was his will to rise above his complaint, when not utterly cast down, one Sunday he had announced that it would be impossible for him to go out on that day; he was not, he said, able to walk to church (the weather being bright and dry, no carriage had been prepared, and could not then be had in time), and he begged Mrs. Eliot and myself to proceed without him.

In a few minutes after our arrival, to our great surprise, he entered the pew, telling us afterwards that, considering it would be his last opportunity of hearing service performed by Doctor Wainwright, he had, notwithstanding all his suffering from lameness and want of breath, managed to follow us.

It happened that this was his last attendance at church! The doctor's sermon turned on a very affecting subject—the probability that a reunion with those we most loved on earth would form a portion of the joys of the blessed hereafter. My husband wept continuously throughout the sermon, although he seemed unusually tranquil and happy the rest of the day.

Wherever he went (except when he dined out) his little Fop was his perpetual companion. He derived the greatest solace from his presence and attachment, which was as remarkable as his intelligence was extraordinary. When Mr. Mathews went to church, Fop walked to the door with him, and was sent back with the servant who had followed to take care of him, and on our quitting church, there the little animal was sure to be found, either reconducted by the said servant, or, in case of the man being behind time (of which this creature was a correct calculator), Fop would find his way without him, and appear sitting at the porch (not attempting to enter) when the service was ended, patiently waiting for his master.

The circumstance of this little creature being constantly with him caused a very ridiculous dilemma and a scene on board a

ferry-boat one day, when going over to the opposite shore, during our stay in New York. A large Glumdalka-like woman, attended by a female "nigger," laid sudden and vehement claim to poor Fop! She positively charged Mr. Mathews with having stolen him from her. It was soon pretty evident that this lady (whom, I am sorry to say, my husband discovered to be English) had appeared before the American Bar* that morning, where she had been found guilty of "stealing" away her own "brains." In fact, she was tipsy, the only word I dare borrow for a crime, so monstrous in woman as to have no name of its own provided in our language. Well, this unfortunate being clamorously contested my husband's right to the little creature, whom she called by the name of some ancient hero; and, though Fop disdained to "answer" to it, and her "nigger" assured her *Missy* "dat *dis* dog. not *dat* dog"—in other words, not the dog lost—the besotted woman expressed her intention of taking possession of the animal, and asked who dared to oppose her will? For a moment American valour quailed under this defiance; but in the next, Justice resumed her scales, and the deportment of the lady, the evidence of her black attendant, and, above all, the shyness of her alleged favourite, who was proof against all her invitations and endearments, refusing, moreover, to acknowledge the name with which his would-be mistress dignified him, availed to invalidate her claim, and Fop eventually landed at Hoboken the undoubted property of "his master," while the enraged female staggered from the vessel breathing vengeance, and honouring my poor husband with many epithets not mentionable "to ears polite."

* The "bar" of a hotel, or steam-boat, or "grocery," is nothing more nor less than a counter covered with spirituous liquors, offering at once a temptation and cheap opportunity to the intemperately inclined.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Letters from Mrs. Mathews to Mr. C. J. Mathews; Mr. Mathews's appearance at New York; anticipations of return home; renovation of Mr. Mathews's health; a "cold snap;" interior of an American house—Letter from Mr. Mathews to the Rev. Thomas Speidell—Mr. Mathews's last appearance in New York—Embarkation for England—Letter to Mr. C. J. Mathews; arrival at Liverpool; the homeward voyage; sudden and alarming illness of Mr. Mathews; a violent gale.

To C. J. Mathews, Esq.

New York, Feb. 7th, 1835.

I HAVE the pleasure of informing you that your father's health, and spirits also, are renovated in a great degree within the last week. I mentioned to you that he did not feel strong enough for his "At Home," on his return to New York, and, therefore, he was compelled to act in the drama; and it is to be regretted (too late) that he did not do this first, as well as last; for, contrary to all calculations, the attraction is such, that a night or so has been solicited in addition to the stipulated number; and, spite of the frost and snow, he has played in "Married Life," * three successive nights, to great houses, and he performs two nights next week, and finishes in the same character on Wednesday next, his benefit.

I went to see him last Wednesday, and I never anywhere heard a more joyous and delighted audience. All this is gratifying, for he will close as brilliantly at New York as he began. "My Wife's Mother" would have been an additional hit, but it is now too late.

Since my last letter we have had what is called by the Americans "a cold snap!" again,—such rain, thunder, lightning, snow, wind, and frost!!! In order to be in some measure freed from taps at the door and intrusive visitors, we have, with great interest, procured a lodging in the house of an English family, very well educated, intelligent, and kind persons, who do all their restricted means will admit of to make us comfortable; giving us a sitting-room to ourselves, and our breakfasts, teas, and suppers (when we want any) there, but we dine with them. So here we are quiet at least, and have the privilege sometimes of denying ourselves to bores. But when I tell you that it is a corner-house, with one window looking upon the river (of course a really delightful

* The character of *Coddle*.

view, and as such a great comfort to your dear father), two other windows round the corner looking into the street—one door opening on to the staircase, another into the next room, and no curtains—you may "guess" pretty well how "Eolus, Boreas, and all the gentle breezes," are excluded! Next, figure to yourself (having placed these windows and doors, and a fireplace, at equal distances all round a room not larger than my boudoir at the cottage) white-washed walls, with a great number of superannuated nails, that have once "done the state some service," but now, from the absence of pictures, rendered only fit to point out what has been. Then carry your eye to the pier between the twin-windows, exhibiting large gaps in the wall torn away by the absent mirror, reluctant of removal, which once decorated the space, and now possibly transplanted to gayer scenes; then observe a thin drugget, meanly assuming the name and character of a carpet. A wooden "mantel," ornamented with a pair of curling-irons, left there by the hair-dresser, and employed by your father to "fix" coals upon the fire (no tongs in the house); a corkscrew (our own purchase); a parcel of used pens; sundry snuff-canisters; a stone bottle, with "English ink;" a small glass ink-holder; a wine-glass of "yesterday's" use (overlooked by the young Irish lady, who does us the honour of *helping* us, when she "fixed" the room in the morning), blushing with shame (or perhaps claret) at its improper location. Then behold six reed-bottomed, ragged, rickety chairs; a little pier-table, covered with books and newspapers from England; and a square one, upon which I now write, and you have the complete inventory of our drawing-room ("parlour"), which would puzzle Mr. George Robins himself to print with any effect.

The bedroom adjoining is in perfect harmony with this apartment. Last night the drapery, which I insisted upon having put up for my peculiar notions of comfort, and which was nailed to the ceiling by a piece (a bit) of packthread, from which depended a rod of wood resembling a stage truncheon which held up the poor thin, unlined, scant curtain—all fell upon my devoted head, and at one fell swoop, covered me with mortar, nails, dust, and crackling calico. Such a fright! I thought the new world was at an end! Well, with all these conveniences and luxuries we are obliged to be satisfied, and for all these "appliances and means to boot" of enjoyment, we pay about as much as we should for rooms at the Clarendon! But I must reserve something for our evenings at home, and will not surfeit you with sweets, and our advantages over you, but gradually break them to you on our return, when they will serve for sweet discourses lovingly sustained.

Before I proceed, let me premise that eye and pen at this time combine to render my writing rather obscure, and my English ink is rather murky.

What your father means to do at Liverpool, before we proceed to London, I do not know, and must not inquire until we are there; for, though I assure you he is much better than he was, he is yet far from re-established in health, and I am obliged to use great caution not to

agitate him. The medical men and others all believe that a reaction will take place when he gets to England, and that he will be as well as ever.

Still I shall have regrets when I leave this country; the more than kind Simpsons, and my Boston friends must be ever dear to me. In Mrs. Eliot I leave a sister; and, the idea of parting, as it must be, for ever, is painful indeed. If you knew how amiable and how superior she is, you would allow that I have reason to be proud of her friendship, as I am affectionately attached to her.

My spirits are elated at the prospect of being again united to you, my beloved Charles; difficulties are to be re-encountered, but I shall again be near you; and your poor father's health will be restored by the voyage. At all events we shall feel vexations and care lighter in England, after what we have encountered elsewhere; and, when you are aware of the extent of our sufferings, you will rejoice to have us back again, under any circumstances. I fear to hear of the embarrassment thrown upon you, as to the writing for the entertainment at such short notice.

Oh! for an evening of positive privacy! a room sometimes to myself; the power to pursue any rational plan of passing time without the fear of interruption! Oh, the first evening that I find myself sitting with you and your father, doors and windows closed, in a chair without a rocker, and a window curtain at my back!

God bless you, my beloved Charles! Pray for us, that my best anticipations may be realized.

A. M.

New York, Feb. 15, 1835.

My Dearest Charles,—If the "tide serves, and the wind's fair," we quit this country to-morrow morning; and the enclosed is a small addenda to the work done here,—more properly, a bill of exchange for one hundred and fifty pounds, in consequence of a great house on your father's benefit night, when he and the New Yorkers parted more than in common cordiality with each other, and they huzzaed him, all the audience standing up. He is much better in health; but may be, and I trust will be, still better after his voyage.

Now, if the packet which carries the letters, and quits this port at the same time that the "ship *Columbus*" (by which we sail) departs, —if, I say, by dint of galloping, said packet should take an unfair advantage, it may arrive in England before us. Your father, therefore, on the chance sends this by it, enclosing the bill of exchange (which send immediately to Cockburn's), and a piece of newspaper, containing an account of the last night.

It is agreed between your father and myself that I shall proceed home without him from Liverpool;* so remember, if I am well enough, I

* This plan was in anticipation of Mr. Mathews being well enough to accept an engagement at Liverpool to perform.

shall proceed forthwith to home, dear home! Let as much be got in readiness as possible. What a glorious feeling will be the first actual "Not at home" that I shall have occasion to give!

I am up to my ears literally,—packing and paying, with a room full of successive callers. I hear nothing but the words, "*Columbus*"—"delivery of letters,"—"east wind,"—and dollars. So can no more than add my blessing, and a prayer that we may meet again in safety. My beloved Charles, may Heaven grant that I may find you well!

Your ever affectionate mother, A. M.
And father, C. M.

To the Rev. Thomas Speidell.

New York, January 30th, 1835.

My dear Speidell,—Though I believe you are not one of those friends who exacted from me a promise to write from the *dis*-united States, yet I cannot allow you to reproach me on my return for my silence; nor can I allow my own conscience to be burthened with the reproach of having neglected one of my kindest and most hospitable friends. Therefore be satisfied,—take the will for the deed,—and be assured that I have not selected you for the object of indifference on my part. I have constantly endured pangs on your account, and reproaches from Mrs. Mathews; but I hope to draw upon your approbation, after all this preface, by telling you that you will be one of four who alone have heard from me. The fact is, that I have been ill, literally every day since October the first; and my wife never urged me to write during the whole of that period that I did not look at her as if she had proposed the most preposterous undertaking.

After forty days of uninterrupted health and boyish spirits, I was attacked on my landing by concealed riflemen, or bush-fighters, under the name of mal-aria, or miasma, or something to be aimed at me like the brave President behind the cotton-bags, without a chance of my knowing my enemy. When I tell you that I have since that date acted but thirty nights, you may suppose how my speculation, in a mercantile point of view, has failed, and the mortification is infinitely greater than a real failure—I mean neglect of the public—for to sickness alone can I attribute my disappointment. I am now playing a farewell engagement of six nights, and then I am resolved to return.

It is my intention to leave on the 16th of February, in the *Columbus*, for Liverpool. Mrs. Mathews, thank God! has supported me by having enjoyed excellent health from the first day of her landing, after forty days of sickness. But for her, I believe I must have sunk. My spirits have been so deplorably depressed, that, but for her cheerfulness, arising from health, my burthen would have been doubled. We have had the good fortune, also, to encounter the severest winter since 1787, disputes only arising as to the state of freezing—whether the thermometer was thirty or twenty only below zero—or Nero, as the

niggers say. This climate is only fit for butterflies in summer, and wolves and bears in winter.

One cause of my depression has been the remorse I have endured from having compelled Fop to accompany me. He is, however, remarkably well, and has been a great comfort to me. O, dear Speidell, you will find me a converted man. This visit has destroyed all the pleasing recollections of the country. There are a few most pleasing and intelligent persons; but there are a hundred thousand Irish tyrants at least, who, from a hackney coach upwards, drive you as they please. I congratulate you on the return of the Tories. I wish you could send all the Whigs here. I should like no better punishment than their being compelled to visit America in search of liberty.

Ever sincerely yours, C. MATHEWS.

I here introduce the bill of his last appearance in public :—

Farewell Benefit of Mr. Mathews at New York.

This evening, February 11th, 1835, will be performed the comedy of

MARRIED LIFE.

Mr. Samuel Coddle,—Mr. Mathews.
Mr. Lionel Lynx,—Mr. Mason.
Mrs. Lionel Lynx,—Mrs. Chapman.
Mrs. Samuel Coddle,—Mrs. Wheatley.

In the course of the evening, Mr. Mathews will sing the Comic Songs of

The Humours of a Country Fair, and Street Melodies (a medley), including Welsh, French, Scotch, Irish, African, Italian, Swiss, and English airs, with embellishments.

After which, an Entertainment by Mr. Mathews, called

THE LONE HOUSE.

Andrew Steward, butler and leader,—Mr. Mathews.
Bechamel, a French valet,—Mr. Mathews.
Frizwaffer, a German cook,—Mr. Mathews.
Cutbush, a gardener,—Mr. Mathews.
Captain Grapnell, a naval officer,—Mr. Mathews.

Doors open at a quarter before six o'clock; performance commences at a quarter before seven.

So near a prospect of return to England had the effect upon Mr. Mathews's spirits as almost to give an appearance of amended health; and so it ever was with him. We dined with our hospitable friends, Mr. and Mrs. Simpson, who had kindly collected on this occasion a knot of my husband's favourites (their friends), and amongst them Doctor Holland, an intellectual

and refined gentleman in any country, Mr. Placide, an American actor of great talent; and Mr. Mason, nephew to Mr. Charles Kemble.

On this day my husband's warmest and most exuberant feelings arose to make the meeting most cheerful and delightful, and his partiality for his excellent host and hostess led him to exert himself in a manner that I now reflect upon with wonder. We expected to sail on the following day, but were detained by weather. On the morning of the 18th, when we joined the ship, his spirits again mounted. A number of friends, gentlemen of the theatre and others, came on board to take leave of him, and several accompanied us as far as the pilot went. During the whole of their stay, the deck rung with his sprightly sallies—he was all energy and hilarity, and, as far as his voice could follow the pilot's vessel which took his laughing friends away, he continued to amuse them with his drolleries and overflowing spirits.

My next letter to Charles will give particulars of our voyage.

To Charles J. Mathews, Esq.

Waterloo Hotel, Liverpool, March 11, 1835.

My dearest Charles,—We arrived here late yesterday evening, Heaven be praised! after a voyage of nineteen days, having sailed from New York on the 18th of February. The earlier part of our passage was warm* and prosperous, the wind favourable, and our progress surprisingly rapid; a palace of a ship (a *ship*, mind), an accomplished seaman for our captain, and every accommodation, I verily believe, that can be possibly given under this dreadful species of imprisonment and torture. Only three passengers besides ourselves—myself the only lady on board; for females seldom sail at this period of the year, it seems; nor is there at any time a fire to be had in the ladies' cabin, so unusual and unexpected are female passengers after the warm season. I remained during the first ten days (the time of my extreme suffering) in the apartment appropriated to me, wrapped up in cloaks, and occasionally a small feet-warmer to keep mine in vital warmth, only one stove being fitted up, and that a small one, inadequate to the comfort of even the few gentlemen whose cabin it was in. But this was unimportant while the wind and weather continued fair.

Your father was unwell and restless; but he eat and drank and "got along" as well as I could hope after his severe illness and general indisposition since we landed in America. His cough continued, it is true; but he was not worse than he had been for some time. I had been well enough to dine two or three days with the gentlemen, and was recovering a little of my exhausted strength, when one day (the

* For the time of year, and compared with the frost we left behind us at New York.

3rd of March) your father's absence after dinner was noticed, and he was supposed to have gone on deck; but a dreadful groan from the ladies' cabin alarmed us all, and a simultaneous rush discovered to us your poor father apparently in the agonies of death: his face so drawn in and pale, that it was hardly possible to conceive such a change in so few minutes—his hands clenched, and his whole frame distorted with agony. He managed to make me understand that he had spasms in his chest. One of the gentlemen, a Major Young, humanely rubbed him violently, every one was alike kind and anxious, and ultimately successful in restoring him, though in a dreadfully weakened state, to comparative ease. The captain medicined him as well as his small skill allowed, and he became partially well by night. As for me, it will sufficiently convey to you an idea of my despair and horror, when I tell you that for some minutes the captain and the other gentlemen believed your father dead, in which belief I joined.

Imagine my misery, for I cannot represent it by words; I was up the two following nights in attendance upon him, in despite of my own ailings (brought back by this fright), and the entreaties of those kind men, that I would entrust the poor sufferer to their care, and who *would* partially assist. The captain came several times at night to the berth, and was most affectionately attentive, as indeed he had been from the moment we entered his ship. Thus, with constant care and watching, your father returned to something more like ease than we expected he could, until better advice could be had.

Unfortunately, the wind and weather changed, and then succeeded to our heretofore prosperous progress, the most alarming and boisterous gales of wind that can be imagined. Friday and Saturday the captain and crew (all in the most unremitting state of exertion) knew not where we were,—the foresail torn all to ribbons before it could be taken down. The whole ship was made bare, and the horrors of those two days and nights can never leave my memory. About Sunday these alarming gales subsided, when the wind altogether forsook, or if not, became adverse to us. I was perforce, after my two nights' watching of your father, confined again by illness to my berth for two days and nights, packed up as the means of preserving me from falling out of it at every motion of the ship, during which your poor father, sufferer as he was, insisted upon watching me, having his mattress placed on the ground by my side.

We had very bad storms in the *Canada*, as we thought: they were ripples on the sea compared to this; and the captain has since confessed, "though he had been a sailor from the time that he was no taller than a musquito, and out in all sorts of weather, he never encountered so serious a gale as this, and that he should have despaired had he not relied on the soundness of his ship." He added that he would not have been in the *Canada* under such a trial for the bribe of all it contained. I tell you thus much, my dearest Charles, that our present safety may make you more than commonly happy, for it has been decidedly in peril.

I have occupied more of my space in this letter than I ought; for I have still something to add as to the future. Your father has had a night of much suffering: no sleep—nor I either, as you can suppose. He will not allow of a physician being sent for to-day, but has had Dr. Rattray's prescription made up, which relieved him when so very ill at Mr. Speidell's in order to try its present effect first. His re-appearance in an "At Home" this season in London is not probable, even were he prepared; and it is more than doubtful whether, ill as he is, he could study had he the materials ready: all is, therefore, for a day or two unsettled. He is anxious for one reason for my return home; but, of course, I cannot—will not leave him here alone, unless he improves in a day or so, which may be likely from his present quiet and comfort, and the change of climate: in that case I must travel alone. Prepare for me, therefore, my beloved Charles, as I may only give you a few hours' notice of my appearance. Let there be as little to do after my arrival as possible; for I am wearied with noise and excitement, and pine for a little repose.

I have performed a painful pilgrimage: may it be received in part atonement for my sins! You will find that I have pursued it with all possible constancy and patience. My progress has not been uncheered, for I have found friends and comforters even in the barrenness of the land. Selfishly, I must own that I have met with a succession of kindnesses from the moment I entered the *Canada*, which have continued without intermission up to the moment of my return; such interest as places my oldest friends, in a comparative point of view, far inferior to strangers. Were I in love with vanity, I should not wish to return to the cold hearts and hollow professions of the "old world." Nevertheless, I am rejoiced at turning my back upon the "new world" for general reasons, and particularly as it has swallowed up so much of your poor father's health.

Let not these remarks depress you, for I am not further damped than concerns your father's health, of which I still trust to the restoration in time. I shall write again as soon as I have anything fresh to say—that is, when your father is better or worse, the latter of which Heaven forbid! He joins with me in a fervent blessing to you, my beloved Charles.

Your affectionate mother, ANNE MATHEWS.

P.S.—Write by return, addressed to your father here, because, if I am gone, he will like to have a line from you, and if I am not, it will be a comfort to me. Suspend your brain labour until you get another despatch from me, and rest your imagination for a day or two. Tell Mr. Yates of the chance against an "At Home" this year without delay, and our arrival here, but do not own when I intend to arrive in London to any one but Sophia, and beg her to be secret, for I cannot be broken in upon at first. Read her this letter with my kindest love. To all who mention our landing, say we are detained at Liverpool by your father's illness for an indefinite period.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Mr. Mathews's anxiety as to his affairs—The excellence of his character—Letters to Mrs. Mathews: state of Mr. Mathews's health, and treatment of his medical attendants—Mr. Winstanley's account of the illness of Mr. Mathews—Letters to Mrs. Mathews: improvement in the health of Mr. Mathews; his endeavour to mingle jest with pain; preparations for removal to Crick; the journey thither—Application from the Committee of the Theatrical Fund—Mr. Mathews's reply—Letters to Mrs. Mathews: Despondency of Mr. Mathews—Letter to Mr. Gyles.

Business of great importance required immediate and personal attention in London. Mr. Mathews fretted about it, and at last conjured me to go to town, and set his mind more at ease by communicating with him upon its progress, declaring that it caused some part of his illness not to have me transacting an affair of such vital importance to the future. Alas! he was then morbidly sensitive about money matters; and, for the first time in his life, considered them in everything. Charles was miserable at not being allowed to join us at Liverpool. His father would not hear of "the expense." In short, the remnant of his property, the Adelphi Theatre, caused him the most intense anxiety. He often reverted to it, and, as if in apology to me, deplored that he had no more to leave me than I could live respectably upon, and that when I might most require it, I must necessarily resign a carriage, to which I had been so many years accustomed. To preserve this little freehold property entire occupied his thoughts day and night. This in a year or two he calculated would pay off what, in one of his calamitous failures, he had borrowed on interest, and thus would be left unincumbered.

That he was allowed to indulge in this comfortable fallacy throughout his illness, is the most consoling reflection I have to reconcile me to his death. Troubled, indeed, would have been his last days, had the crisis arrived some months earlier, which for the time deteriorated the property upon which he depended

so entirely for my future support;* I am gratefully sensible of the mercy which concealed this from him, whose whole life was one continuous care to preserve those he loved from suffering. Few better merited the prosperity he met with, and few misused the advantages of fortune so innocently. His heart was without guile, his character untainted with a shade even of dishonour. His failing was from not having studied the world's craft, by which want of knowledge he was continually open to the specious and false, for he was trusting and benevolent in his nature, a benefactor without ostentation, a friend without reserve. His tender consideration, his unvarying affection for his family, his meekness and simplicity in prosperity, his constancy in adversity, his moral and religious feelings, of the sincerity of which his life was a practical illustration—his conscientious fulfilment of all he professed, his patient endurance of wrongs, his submissive resignation to inflictions, were admirable.

Writing as I do, after more than two years' reflection,† and constantly dwelling upon his character, I can appeal to Heaven to witness my sincere conviction that I have been unable to detect in it one serious blemish. He had acknowledged failings of temper, deplored more by himself than any other, but they were transient in their effects, and, as it has proved, as much the result of bodily infirmity as of natural sensitiveness. On looking back, I can even remember these ebullitions of a moment as virtues, knowing, from the disclosures after his death, the sufferings he concealed under the imputation of a faulty temper. Let those who were fond of commenting upon his infirmity remember his countless excellences, which, while I dwell upon them, teach me to thank God who made him without other alloy to his great talents, and left me without one fear as to the perfection of his future happiness. He died without earthly riches, it is true, but he laid up treasures in Heaven which will never decrease; and these thoughts are too precious not to make me satisfied with the result of his good intentions. Had he left me millions, acquired by hard accumulation, or snatched away from his debtors in the midst of their misfortunes—had he selfishly

* The cause of this sudden change from success to failure in the Adelphi Theatre (and which lasted only with the cause) was the unprecedented arrangement at Covent-Garden Theatre, which suddenly reduced its price of admission to the rate of the minor theatres, thus giving the Adelphi audience the novel advantage of entering a theatre to which they had never before been able to afford admission. Though this effect lasted but a brief period, it proved too long to enable us to support the chance of continued loss.

† These pages were written in the autumn of 1837.

neglected the needy, or proved harsh to the erring, I should have been less happy than I now am in the consciousness of his deservings and his extensive Christian charity.

> Of all the legacies the dying leave,
> Remembrance of their virtues is the best.

But I have suffered my feelings to run away with my pen. I was compelled at length to obey my husband's earnest desire that I would set off for town, and as no very material change had appeared from the time of our arrival at Liverpool, I assented, leaving him to the watchfulness of several attentive and attached friends, upon whose care I had entire reliance. I carried with me, however, a heavy heart, and at the moment of parting, he who had almost insisted upon the act, sunk upon my shoulder into a convulsive expression of feeling. I begged still to stay, but in spite of his tears and sobs, he persisted in the necessity of my departure, and that he should feel better in consequence of knowing that the business he was anxious about was regulated by my attention to it. He would have sent his servant with me, but this I positively forbade, and under these distressing circumstances I proceeded alone to London.

The succeeding correspondence will describe all that followed my departure, when the dear invalid was all anxiety to proceed to his old friend and schoolfellow, the Rev. Thomas Speidell's rectory, to whom he had written before I left Liverpool to apprize him of his wish.

The first letter to me was begun by himself, but finished by a friend.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Liverpool, Saturday, March 21st, 1835.

My dearest Nancy, — Speidell writes, "Come to Crick, — come when you like, and make up your mind to stay some time there."

I have the pleasure to tell you truly, that last night I slept from half-past two in my crib until half-past eleven—the first night's rest I may call it since I arrived. They have all visited me. Mrs. —— sat two hours with me last night. But for a violent irritation in my feet and ankles, I believe I should have gone through the night without waking.

The letter was thus continued:—

My dear Mrs. Mathews, pray don't be alarmed at my finishing this letter. By great good fortune I have persuaded Mathews to have advice; and the reason why he cannot finish this is, that my excellent friend Dr. Bryce, after patiently listening to Mr. Mathews's accurate description of his case from the first attack, has ordered leeches to his chest, and he is now reclined on his chair, with some twenty or twenty-four of those

gentlemen on his chest. A poultice of linseed is to succeed this; and Dr. Bryce has great hopes that to-night our poor invalid will be able to lie down in his bed.

The Doctor says, that had he lost a little blood on his first arrival, his legs would not have been affected; that he did quite right to put leeches on his foot, but that the disorder of the legs is nothing but a natural consequence of his complaint. Dr. Bryce is now assisting him most adroitly with the leeches, and feels much interest about their performing properly. He read Dr. Rattray's prescription with great approbation, and seems to have no doubt but in a short time Mr. Mathews will be able to travel; such is the state of his system at present, that it would not be advisable to hurry him. The Doctor has ordered Mr. Mathews to inhale steam, and I have sent for an inhaler. It gives me great pleasure to have at last prevailed, and I give myself credit for a little management. Dr. Bryce was with me last night. I mentioned to him Mr. Mathews's case, and his obstinate opinion that he knew his own case better than any one. Dr. Bryce replied, "Then why does he not cure himself?" This I repeated to-day to my friend, and he almost immediately asked me to bring Dr. Bryce, to my great joy.

I hope all will now be well. If Mr. Mathews can be relieved from his suffering, and lie down to rest, all other ailments will speedily cease. So make yourself as happy as you can. Don't be too sanguine as to time, and be assured nothing shall be wanting.

Kind remembrance to our favourite Charles.

Conclude me, my dear madam, faithfully yours,

THOMAS WINSTANLEY.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Liverpool, March 26th, 1835.

I am certainly better, and my cough trifling to what it has been. I had the first good night last night in the big bed,* and, but for the intolerable trouble of the legs, should have slept, I believe, all night. My surgeon, Dr. Bryce, smoked with me till twelve o'clock; he has been a great traveller, in Egypt and many other countries, and is very intelligent. My legs are bandaged up to my knees, which is a painful process, and I am undergoing it now, propped up while I write.

I have just received your long letter. I can't say a word about the time of going; my legs must be reduced first. Speidell must not expect me till I write to him to say I have taken my place. Don't expect to hear from me to-morrow, for it is a great effort, as I dare not put my legs down. I am supported by the pleasure in perspective at seeing you and dear Charles. God bless, &c.

C. M.

* He had caused a sort of crib to be placed by the side of the large bed, as it was easier to get into.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Liverpool, March 28th, 1835.

There is no chance of my moving yet. I am sure Bryce is sincere in wishing to get me to Crick; it is I who feel it to be impossible. I have had a blister on to-day, from which I expect relief; but it is a foe to writing. Bryce, for his own satisfaction, has called in the most experienced man here.* Winstanley dances for joy at this. He is a very old Quaker; he perfectly approves of all that Bryce has done. My nights are gradually improving, and I can lie on my back, though a blister all night drawing was not favourable. The old gentleman gives a very cheerful view of my case, but recommends rest here; yet I am glad you have declared yourself, for Mrs. Waldron has threatened to come here and nurse me. I am in a perspiration. I have fully expected her by the mail to-night—only fancy, her without you. I had another long ride yesterday with Lewis. I have great, very great faith in being much better to-morrow; but the dressing of a large blister is not a pleasing operation, and this has been "a bad day for the Honourable Mr. Wyndham," &c.

God bless you all. C. M.

His endeavour always to mingle jest with pain was part of his kind system when absent from me.

The woman to whom allusion is made at the close of the above letter once attended him as a rubber. This person was always anxious to impress upon my husband's attention her great connexion, and that he was the only commoner she condescended to attend; she would ingeniously, as she believed, introduce those boasts incidentally in the course of her remarks upon weather, &c. Sometimes she told Mr. Mathews how Lord and Lady B—— were affected by frost, the Duke of C—— by rain, and the Marquis of D—— by heat; but one day, having come to the end of her noble list, she observed, during a boisterous sort of morning, "This is a bad day for the Honourable Mr. Wyndham."

To Mrs. Mathews.

Liverpool, Saturday, March 29th, 1835.

On Monday morning I have no doubt at all of my improvement; but it is, and it will be, very slow. The worst symptoms—the shortness of breathing—are conquered, and I can rest in bed as formerly; a great point. I am tortured by their keeping the blister open till to-night. This is a horror; but my "leeches" are cheerful. I have had another set on my foot to-day; I don't mean Doctors ——. My complexion is absolutely ruddy, and I could eat if they would let me. The *Canada*,

* Dr. Rutter.

I see, is arrived. Now, I do hope Britton will set that affair right with Price.* Excuse more.

God bless thee and dear Charles.

Ever, ever affectionately yours, C. MATHEWS.

In this manner I was induced to remain in London, anxious and waiting from post to post for a summons to Crick, whither on his expected convalescence he was to proceed.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Liverpool, March 31st, 1835.

MY DEAR, DEAR NANCY,—How good you are to write so much to me. I did not expect a line to-night, therefore the *Molesworth* was a God-send. If you could know "how low they have reduced" a man, you might fancy my childish joy at any touch of pleasant news. The —— and —— have set me up. I can't trust myself to remarks; I am truly pleased. Pray cultivate this feeling; I know you will for my sake. The attention of all is most cheering. I deserve the Canterbury tale. Lady C. is right not to go to Canada. I am sure you think so. If they did but know how they have worried me by night. I spent as scratching, tumbling, sleepless hours as Lord Canterbury. I always liked him, and had he been a brother I could not have had my thoughts more occupied than they have been about him. He never will know it; but the sight of her hand had a very odd effect on a mind tottering, at all events, as mine has been. Convey from me how obliged I am by inquiries.

I have almost been sobbing over your list of kindnesses and your own affectionate expressions. This morning's letter would have settled all doubts as to the folly of your coming here to return to Crick—at least, I hope so. I am better every hour; but the recovery of strength you are aware is not very magical. My legs are of the proper size. This is marvellous! My knees since you left me have been as large as the thickest part of my thigh. It was truly appalling.

I was nearly four hours in Lewis's carriage yesterday, and could have gone forty miles in my way, I am sure. One of his greys was taken with a pain under his saddle on Sunday, and, as the flurry on Friday before of my getting ready had almost brought on suffocation, it was agreed that I should be got ready for starting—so I was dressed. You have seen a child of about five and a half got up for such a ride, all stiff and uncomfortable, trying to look happy; the fingers all poked unnaturally out for fear of crumpling the gloves; expecting to be lifted into the *shay*—the lip ready to be poked out if not lifted with ease and nicety. At two on Sunday I was thus equipped, and allowed to sit at the window to watch for the carriage. Every grey pony that showed

* This "hope" referred to an erroneous report made to Mr. Price that my husband had been implicated in a quarrel which had taken place during the voyage out between the agent of the theatres and a Yankee passenger; and Mr. Mathews wished the captain of the *Canada* to contradict this.

his ears round the corner occasioned the clapping of the little hands—"Here he is!" Thirty-five minutes were thus occupied, when lo! the footman announced that one of the horses had been taken ill while dressing. Fancy the rest; "give me my hat and wig again;" the sun shining brilliantly too. Lewis came at three to explain; but the little dear had dried his eyes and got his gloves off, and had his great coat off and folded up in the drawer, and was reconciled. He could have had another horse, but postilion was obliged to turn veterinary. Yesterday made up for all. Your parcel last night almost alarmed me till I opened it; of course you did not look out for an answer, it having been anticipated by the *tria juncta in uno* of this morning. Cobb has twenty-five cabin people ready for turning off to-morrow; think of them to-morrow night. Bryce says I may move this week. It now depends on my feelings; but be prepared. He says I owe all to my constitution and temperance. No person could have recovered with the inside impaired by rich living with my symptoms. Willy Thompson cheered me last night by three hours' chat. Poor James Henderson died a month ago at Geneva.

Love, &c. C. MATHEWS.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Liverpool, April 2nd, 1835.

The deed is done. I have taken two places in the mail, one for me, the other for my legs, and what position I like best. This, I think you will allow, is a sensible plan; and, after thinking the matter over every way (and three hours' more experience of a carriage to-day, and perfect confidence as to strength), we are all agreed that I shall be popped into one carriage, and popped out within seven miles of my new home without anxiety; therefore, to-morrow night, Friday, April 3rd, please God, I leave my melancholy prison, and on Saturday hope to be fetched at Dunchurch at twelve; "so no more about." I am in the dark as to meeting you there, of course; therefore remarks are useless. I have no more to say; but God bless and reward you for all your care and affection to me, for I am sure it is boundless, and never will be forgotten by me. Greatest love to thee and dear Charley.

Ever affectionately yours, C. MATHEWS.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Crick, April 5th, 1835.

MY DEAREST NANCY,—How grateful to God I feel when I look at the above! I have looked forward with such anxiety to reach this spot, that I can hardly believe my own senses that my wishes are realized. That dreary dungeon of a bedroom became at last intolerable. Oh,

what a contrast is this! I hope Mr. Varneham* was faithful, though I suppose he did not get admitted; but Speidell's parcel would. I thought it would be an agreeable surprise to you to see somebody who had seen me, and I hope it turned out well. The way in which I bore my journey is perfectly marvellous. After I had taken my place on Thursday I felt a sudden alarm that I had undertaken too much, and did repent me. On Friday I was so weak and low that I studied Paterson as to the convenient places to stop at in the night. As it came towards execution time, I was one mass of nervous tremor, and terrified at what I had undertaken. Lynn had made interest for the mail to take me up at his door. Fauntleroy felt no more; he could not. "Mail had gone wrong way" was enough for the idlers. They ran to the Waterloo, and my own little knot of farewellers was enough to warrant the reading of the riot act before their arrival. Meshim Mirza, or some such name, was at the Waterloo a fortnight ago, a Persian, and I heard that name actually articulated. You may imagine the rest. I rejoiced when I was safe away, and was fortunate in my strength to adhere to a resolution of keeping awake if possible, and I did. I had thus an opportunity of gazing at *Mister* Willson "without blushing." Oh, could you have seen him! He did not resemble "my father as he slept." I do think him very plain. Well, no matter; I may say I felt not an inconvenience, and, I should say, my journey did me service. Up to this moment I have no evidence that I am a sufferer by it. Is not this astonishing? I thought I should get here all along. The Quaker,† they can tell me now, said when he left me, having heard me say my great anxiety was to get on the road to London,—"Poor fellow! he little thinks what road he's going." You were, of course, not aware I was given over. I did not know, till I began to joke, that I had been in danger. Bryce has very kindly written a very long medical report of my case to Rattray, with all the symptoms, the mode of treatment, with all the prescriptions, &c. Was not this kind as well as judicious? I am very weak, and my cough still troublesome; but I do not feel otherwise as if I should want medical aid. Rattray is, however, coming to-day. Wonder knows no bounds; for they all felt that they only yielded to my obstinacy in attempting to travel for a week to come. The dreaded expense of advice brought me within the verge of eternity; I may say in a double sense the leeches saved me, and now I must bleed again. By Sir William Molesworth you must send a 30*l.* note to Winstanley to-morrow night; but I am alive. Speidell says you and Charles must come directly. Fop wags his tail at you. His first lawn since August delights him.

Yours has just arrived; and I have only five minutes while postman waits. We are very sorry; but, of course, can say no more as to our disappointment. As to wanting you as a nurse, the above will prove to

* A gentleman whom he travelled with, who, though a stranger, showed the most humane and valuable attention to him during the journey.

† Dr. Rutter.

you I do not. I have not time for more remarks; come as soon as you can. God bless you both, my dear loves.

C. Mathews.

Tell Charles there is no cure for his complaint, and no relief from medicine. Leeches or lancet alone will do. Don't believe in any drug. I wish Charles Young were at home: he could tell him. I grieve—truly grieve, at an attack at his age. No reward here for temperance.

An application from the Committee of the Theatrical Fund had, of course, been answered by myself, expressive of my husband's deep concern that he was unable to give his customary assistance at the anniversary dinner.

The day before it took place he felt able to write, and a copy of the following letter has been furnished me for insertion by my husband's old and esteemed friend Mr. Farley:—

To the Committee of the Covent Garden Theatrical Fund.

Crick Rectory, Daventry, April 7th, 1835.

My dear Brethren,—I need not say how much I regret I cannot be with you to-morrow. You all know my sincerity, when I say my heart will be there. I vainly flattered myself that I should take you all by surprise, and present myself last week, "armed at all points;" but alas! I knew not my own weakness. As I am now so near you, I could not endure the thought that you should remain in utter ignorance of my situation, or imagine I was indifferent, or neglecting you without good reason. The newspapers too, I understand, have announced my arrival in London, &c. Therefore, as I thought it probable that, on the day of the anniversary dinner, inquiries might be made by the visitors of the stewards, I felt some little anxiety that you might briefly inform them of the cause of my absence, and say the information came from myself. On the 2nd of October last, I sickened at New York; I felt blighted, my energies withered, my appetite destroyed, my spirits broken. I was not confined to my bed one day; but I was never in health one hour from the time of my arrival until I quitted America.

In December, I announced to my wife my convictions that I must fly or die. I could not play out my engagement at Philadelphia. I performed one night at Boston to a great house; all the tickets were sold for the second. I could not appear, and was confined nine days. When I came out again the thermometer was at twenty-four degrees below zero. I stood at my table one hour and a half; and the bolt of ice that entered my head, and extended to my feet, has, in fact, remained in my lungs until this present moment unthawed! From my landing, 30th September, till I fled, 18th February, I performed in all thirty-two nights. I had the satisfaction of concluding as I commenced at New York, to one of the greatest, if not the best house of the season. The Americans and I parted friends on the night, I believe

now to have been the last upon any stage,* and my spirits were cheered: but I landed, "poor old Mathews," indeed, at Liverpool, broken down (very feeble for eighty) with inflammation of the lungs, asthma, swelled dropsical-looking legs, and, in fact, at one time was given over.

These are the facts. I have rallied against the predictions of the Liverpool physicians, and to the amazement of all who surround me; but I am robbed of all energy, I am weak as an infant, and my stock in trade, my hitherto leathern lungs, give strong indications of being under the influence of the Bostonian shaft of ice with which I was stricken in January.

Mrs. Mathews, who was compelled to leave me when I was pronounced out of danger, has been exceedingly ill herself since her arrival in London; and it struck me to-day that she might not have communicated my exact situation to any of my good fellow-labourers in our great cause. I have removed, as far as this, by easy stages, where I have excellent advice, and shall remain for a few days.

God bless you, dear fellows! If I could be wheeled into the room, I do think I could sing one song to-morrow; but, perhaps, I had better not try. Do, one of you, good boys, write me six lines on Thursday, and say how all went off; directed as above (saying also Northamptonshire). Success—success—huzza! I am doubly hipped. Let all the stewards sign it. Farewell. Remember

POOR "OLD MATHEWS."

To Mrs. Mathews.

Crick, Sunday, 1835.

MY DEAREST NANCY,—I hope we shall see you on Tuesday. I am much better. I have been occasionally so ill and desponding this week, that I did not wish you to see me. My feet have been two masses of swelling and inflammation, and the irritation enough to drive any one mad. The poultices, as large as quartern loaves—the only chance I had to get rest, as they preserved my feet from the ferocious attack of my own nails. Then the old affair, gout or not, has prevented my moving without being wheeled about. The original disease, I believe, to be now nearly conquered, and I am to-day truly better in every respect. I went as far as Daventry yesterday to see Rattray. To-day I am a victim to calomel. The cough almost gone, and no shortness of breathing.

I have more than one or two reasons for fearing I cannot act much longer, if at all.

These things weigh upon my mind night and day, and impede my recovery of strength. Your tone of courage, I fear is mere bravado, to encourage me. Therefore, I should like a well-considered answer to my question from you and dear Charles.† I do not doubt you will be-

* This augury was correct—it *was* his last!

† This question, as well as other allusions obscure to the reader, involves the feelings of existing persons, whom it would be painful to me, as useless, to wound by explanation.

lieve me, that if it pleases God to restore my strength (and MEMORY) I will work to prevent my leaving you, as I fear I should, had I died at Liverpool, and I would do it as willingly for Charles as if he were only three years old. I consider that as much my duty as ever, for I cannot reproach him with his ill luck; but need I say I am most unfortunate. The trip to America I thought my only chance left. Look at the result—and my annihilation now. Oh! that D—— could but see it in the right light, and believe the fact, that integrity as regards him has almost, if not quite, killed me.

If you come on Tuesday, let us know, as I will fetch you; and whenever it is, Speidell is to take me the same day to Sir Charles Knightley, whose leg was broken by his horse dropping down dead in a gallop, and falling on him.

To H. B. Gyles, Esq.

Crick Rectory, Daventry, April 23rd, 1835.

DEAR GYLES,—I am, thank God, recovering, after a desperate struggle of more than a month; indeed, I may say that I have been a severe sufferer, from the 1st of March until the 15th of April, the first eighteen days of which I never went to bed. Inflammation of the lungs, asthmatic symptoms, produced a sensation of suffocation the instant I was placed in a horizontal posture. I was pronounced dead during the voyage (but I never was dead). Luckily we had a beautiful passage of only nineteen days (we had forty going out), and landed early in March, in hopes of change of climate restoring me. I became, however, instantly worse; and suffered horrors, paying off old scores, and making up, as it were, for years of health. I did not know till I partially recovered, sufficiently to move here, that I had been given over by two physicians at Liverpool. My recovery is a wonder. But I am totally incapable of attempting anything professional. My "At Home" has been abandoned; and, in fact, I have lost a year's income by my fatal trip to America. In six months I performed thirty-two nights, and went there with every rational hope of setting all affairs right for life. I felt a conviction that die I must if I stayed, but did not anticipate such ill fortune on my return.

I fear my lungs have done their do. I felt withered and blighted by the Siberian winter of America, and fear I shall never quite recover it. Now I will explain my innuendo. Since I came here, a physician said, "the change of air has done all for you here, I do believe. If I were you, I would go, when I moved, to the sea-side, and get some warm salt-water baths," &c. In about forty-eight hours comes your letter; and, I will say, I was really pleased to see it, because I don't want another niche in my misanthropic calendar. Now I can ask you to deliver a message for me, for I don't know how to direct to him. If it is convenient to him, and he recollects asking me, and was sincere, and he would really like to see me, &c., I should of all things like to come in some part of May. I should in that case go across from hence to Portsmouth, and go thence per steam.

CHAPTER XLV.

Mr. Mathews's departure from Crick—His journey to Oxford—Embarks for Plymouth—His arrival there—Mr. Harris's report as to the progress of Mr. Mathews's illness—Letter to Mrs. Mathews.

My stay at Crick was again unsettled by the same consideration of business in town, which urged my husband to enforce mine and Charles's return; he thinking himself better, and proposing to proceed to Devonshire to visit his bachelor friend, where he felt the presence of a lady would prove an inconvenience. Charles and I, therefore, took a reluctant leave of our dear patient, leaving him prepared to depart from Crick also in a couple of days after; previous to which our host was unexpectedly and suddenly compelled to visit London on business.

To the Rev. Thomas Speidell.

Crick, May 11th.

My dear Speidell,—When you requested I would write, I presume you meant that I should announce the time of my departure from dear Crick. I have therefore waited for the purpose of informing you that I have the decency at length to depart, having performed the part of *Sponge* to the life, and with ease, in less than six weeks. Indeed, had you not in your romantic hospitality pressed me to stay so often, even after your departure, I should be ashamed to acknowledge the extent of my presumption, while I should think it my duty to express my gratitude.

The reason of my stay after the departure of Mrs. Mathews and Charles, was, that Fawcett, with whom I stay a day or two, could not get home till Sunday, nor did I know it till that day,—and that the steamboat days are Tuesdays and Fridays; so that I must have spent all Sunday in Oxford, in preference to the rectory (for which you will think me too good a judge), or left Crick to-day for Oxford, with the great doubt of being in time for the Plymouth boat on Tuesday.

I shall now have ample time, and therefore have taken my place for to-morrow,—proceed on Wednesday to Winchester, where Fawcett meets me,—and embark on Friday. I am so afflicted with shortness of breathing, that I am in horror of a relapse; but this *entre nous*. I

have once or twice wavered as to going to town; but I am too weak to encounter the cares that would crowd upon me at home, and this I soon discovered when I talked upon business here. I say all this, dear friend, to excuse myself a little in your eyes, for my horrible encroachment on your good-nature.

I did the honours yesterday in your absence, to the best of my ability, though albeit unused to the luncheon ceremonies. Mr. Bird did the duty in the morning, and Mr. —— afternoon,—with the utmost timidity, I should think, from his manner of taking refreshment. He had a large congregation, and told me that the size of the church almost frightened him, he being used only to small ones. He was greatly fatigued, and doubted whether he had made himself heard.

I have, in addition to your great kindness and attention to me, to record the unceasing watching and petting of your servants. Messrs. Smith, Cotter, and Hodgson have called; and I have been once out in the gig to call on the latter. I had hoped to have seen some of the Rattrays. Daventry was too far for me, on the chance of seeing the doctor, and therefore I must quit with the load on my mind of my affair with him. I have written to him to say, I have left the delicate subject in your care and keeping. Pray talk it over with Mrs. Mathews. I never was fit for money matters. My impression certainly was, that I had sent for him professionally, and had no opportunity of offering him a fee, as he refused before, unless he wrote a prescription. I leave my honour in your hands.

And now, dear Speidell, allow me to say that I never can forget your unwearied affectionate attentions to me:—they are engraved on my heart, be assured. You have saved my life, if it be but for a short time, by the aid of your hospitable roof. 'Tis but a poor commodity; but if you could be placed in a situation to want it, you should be welcome to the wear and tear of it.

God bless thee, thou kindest of friends, prays your ever grateful and sincere friend,

C. Mathews.

Alas! this excellent and dear friend outlived the writer of the foregoing letter but a few months. Mr. Speidell died suddenly, from an attack of spasms, at his rectory, to the grief of all who had known him. In quitting the world before him, my dear husband escaped the severe pang of losing one whom he loved as a brother; and I have to thank Heaven for this mercy added to the many sorrows that the sufferer was spared by his own timely removal from this world of trial and sadness.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Royal William Victualling-yard, Plymouth,
Saturday, May 17th, 1835.

My dearest Nancy,—I have just now time to keep my promise, and you from suspense, by announcing my safe arrival. "I never was

sick *holl* the way." I believe I slept fifteen hours out of twenty, and am as well as I could have hoped. Beautiful situation—very fine garden, which suits both me and Fop. Franklin brought his own boat to the steamer to meet me, and I had neither trouble nor anxiety. Gyles was here to welcome me, and little Russell; in short, everything is right comfortable, and you would be as satisfied to leave me here as at Speidell's. I will have immediate advice, and proceed at once to a system and course of treatment, until I perceive some amendment of the now worse feature, shortness of breathing.

I have not time now to give my final instructions about the things to be sent, but will in my next.

If Winstanley is not gone from London, show him the following extract from Dr. Bree on asthma:—"The mind of an asthmatic is impatient, and suffers much from an opposition to his own method of management; after several accessions he has ascertained modes of comfort and gratification, which the anxiety of his friends may impede rather than promote by their solicitude and attentions. He therefore is irritable, and with difficulty restrains his disposition to petulance, and absolutely repels the most cautious attentions of friends."

Fawcett, like a good fellow, drove me to Gosport; and now, dear, dear wife, be assured I will do all in my power to recover and keep myself up. God bless thee and dear Charley. Mrs. Gyles sends her kindest regards.

Ever affectionately yours, CHARLES MATHEWS.

Since writing the above, I have seen Mr. Snow Harris, who seems confident in putting me immediately into a course that will restore me. He speaks very cheerfully.

The above extract from Dr. Bree is one of those instances, of which I could quote many, of my husband's generous regret when he thought he might have seemed rude and unthankful for well-meant attention and service. To me, who knew so thoroughly the nature of the apologist, it was very touching to find him indulging in after-thoughts like these, at a time when the mind is generally apt to turn only upon the sufferings of the body. But instead of this selfishness, upon the first pause, a sort of tender compunction seized him, and a desire to make some excuse for any abruptness of manner or opposition to advice and opinion into which he might have been betrayed towards a kind friend. It was ever so—he could not seem unjustly angry or ungracious without feeling deeply himself when it was over.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Plymouth, May 18th, 1835.

DEAR MADAM,—Mr. Mathews has been prevailed on by my advice to apply a large blister over the chest, and to resort to some internal

remedies requisite for his health. We cannot, therefore, permit him to undergo any sort of mental or bodily excitement for some days.

He appears to me to have greatly improved since his first attack at Liverpool, but as is frequently the case with diseases affecting the chest, symptoms of distress in breathing will occasionally show themselves. Without cause for great alarm on your part, therefore, I may perhaps be allowed to say that a slight return of these oppressive symptoms has taken place since his arrival here, brought on probably by the fatigue incidental to a long journey and voyage. We confidently hope, however, that they will effectually be relieved by treatment and perfect quiet in the course of a few days. There are favourable signs of amendment even this morning. I beg you to believe that Mr. Mathews is under the care of friends here who highly regard and prize him, and who will not leave anything undone which may contribute to his health and comfort.

Mr. Mathews is anxious to reply to the communications which he received last night, but we really cannot allow him to undergo the mental excitement which they necessarily imply. We must keep him altogether quiet just at this time.

I am, dear madam, very faithfully and respectfully,
Your humble servant,
WILLIAM SNOW HARRIS.

MY DEAREST NANCY,—I have directed this that you might not suffer a suspense in opening it. I am only suffering under a huge blister, which has kept me in bed. I dare not even read all you have written till to-morrow. Love to dear Charles.

Ever affectionately yours, C. MATHEWS.

I have Sir G. Magrath, physician, as well as Harris.

These communications, however satisfactory they might seem to others, only gave me a fresh anxiety to rejoin him, and I wrote to entreat to be permitted to do so, dreading to act without his consent lest I should agitate him, which I was warned not to do.

To Mrs. Mathews.

Plymouth, May 21st, 1835.

MY DEAR, DEAR LOVE,—Be assured that if there were any necessity for your being with me, I would not allow of a separation. I have had a solemn promise from both my doctors to warn me if I was in any danger, and in that case I meant to send for you or go to London. They both declare I am better than when I came, and do not doubt my being speedily better. The weather is now quite like summer—absolutely warm. I have been out yesterday and to-day. Yesterday nine miles. It is the treatment—the immediate use of an immense blister—and exer-

tion that has affected me more than new symptoms. As to Willson, nothing shall make me submit to him.* My legs are, thank God! recovered. I sleep well. Harris puts me to bed, and attends me before I am up. What can I want with a nurse? I assure you, dearest, your coming would be the greatest inconvenience. F. is a bachelor. You could not be accommodated. To be moved again would be a horror to me. Never had man such an attentive medical attendant. You would be in the way were you to come, and I cannot reconcile the expense. There is no new feature in my case, and the old ones are all mitigated. Mrs. Gyles is a nurse also. She has made me jellies, and some of the party are always with me. At all events, wait patiently till Monday, and I will then speak decisively as to the future; but I have faith in being well enough to remain alone. Writing yesterday was out of the question, and I did not like a strange hand again——

This etter is continued in another hand.

The above blot is mine, and I confess it.† We are all of opinion here, except the invalid, that symptoms of improvement have manifested themselves. He, however, appears to think that it is time to enter upon a system of tonics, and we all know, that when the best doctors have considered a case and prescribed for it, that the old axiom of every man at forty being either a fool or a physician, means simply, that nature has her own remedies in reserve, and is eager to suggest them.

The weather is extremely fine, and that, combining with the novelty of the scene, may aid his spirits and amuse his imagination, tending eventually, though not so rapidly as we all desire, to that happy restoration of health which is essential to both your enjoyments. The season, and I think I may confidently add, the undoubted skill of his medical advisers, promise a happy result; therefore, my dear Mrs. Mathews, rest satisfied that, surrounded by his friends, and assisted by the best advice, your dear husband may be considered on the mending hand. H. G.

My dear Mrs. Mathews,—I can only repeat what my husband has said before in regard to your dear husband, that every earthly attention that old friends can give he shall have; and I do think that in a few days we shall be able to give you a good account of our endeavours to restore him to us all again. The situation here is everything you can desire, and you may depend upon our care. With kind regards to Charles, believe me, dear Mrs. Mathews,

Yours affectionately, Charlotte Gyles.

Thus was I beguiled, and thus was I prevented from doing what I felt I ought not to have been denied.

* I had suggested that he ought to have a person about him to whom he had been accustomed, and proposed his late servant, not being at the time wholly acquainted with all my husband's reasons for discharging him.

† A feint, as I afterwards learned, in compliance with my husband's desire, that the sudden disability which had caused the blot should be concealed from my knowledge.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Formal announcement to Mrs. Mathews of the impossibility of her husband's recovery—Mr. Wightwick's recital of the progress of Mr. Mathews's disorder—A happy evening—Final interview between Mr. Mathews and his son—Mr. Mathews's conversation in writing—His night-visions—Delusive symptoms—His last words—His death—The last mournful ceremonies—His monument.

In consequence of an intimation sent unknown to him to apprize me of his dangerous state, I and Charles hastened to Plymouth with feelings of the most miserable description, when, notwithstanding all my husband's opposition (from prudential motives) to admitting those about him whom he loved best, after the first surprise of arrival was over, the dear sufferer declared his satisfaction. From that moment I was his constant and exclusive attendant, and O what soothing reflections are those to my disconsolate mind, that he would from that time only allow me to nurse him! Such thankfulness, such gratitude did he show, and such affection during my task! But of this I must not write.

After a few days I was formally summoned apart from my dear husband, and informed by the physicians of the utter impossibility of his recovery. Who shall describe the agony of that moment! and yet, after the first burst of anguish, and I had stifled a part of the emotions excited, I presented myself before the dear object of my care as if I had nothing new upon my mind! Nay, I attended him for weeks after; and, in spite of every evidence of his danger, entertained hope to the very last hour of his existence!

At length his doctors advised a removal, not only for a change of air, but in order that their patient might be nearer to them, and therefore more promptly and frequently visited in case of necessity. Even this proposition failed to startle me, and I took advantage of one of his least suffering days to convey the poor invalid to a lodging in Plymouth.

I am quite unequal, even at this period, to recount the pro-

gress of my dear husband's disorder, and again refer the reader to Mr. Wightwick's faithful and interesting recital.

He several times took leave of his family and friends under the conviction that he was dying. On one of these melancholy occasions I was present. A paroxysm, of frightful violence, suddenly came on, accompanied by alarming faintness. His fondness as a husband, father, and friend, was most affectingly manifested in the sad farewell which he fancied he was then taking, and the condition of his soul was impressively shown by the prayer which, with uplifted hands, he addressed to his Maker. His surgeon alone maintained his composure, and bade us qualify our emotions, under the reasonable expectation of his getting through this, as he had through other fits of equal violence. It was impossible, however, for the unprofessional mind to regard his death-like struggle as less than it seemed to be. The words which he uttered were of too domestic and delicate a nature for publication; neither shall I set down the words of his supplication. A preparation of ether was administered. Its reviving effect first prompted him to question the kindness which restores, only for additional suffering, a man who had resigned himself to death. In a few moments, however, gratitude superseded regret, and in a quarter of an hour after he had been at the worst, he was as well as at any time during the last two months of his life.

He delighted in affording an agreeable surprise to his friends, as the following fact will show:—His medical attendants had left him one morning exceedingly ill, and without hope of his leaving his bed for the day. Such was their anxiety that they shortly repeated their visit, and proceeded immediately, as a matter of course, to his bedroom. There he was, to all appearance, lying as they left him, with little more than his nightcap visible above the clothes. In short, there was nothing beneath them more than a stuffed mockery, for the man himself had arisen, shaved, washed, neatly dressed himself, and walked unassisted down stairs into the sitting-room, where he received his surprised visitors with a significant "Aha!"

I called upon him one evening, and took the liberty of introducing a friend. During our stay several visitors from time to time came in. It struck me that Mathews was more than usually irritable; I caught his eye, and he beckoned me to a close parley—"I don't know whether you are aware of it, but I have observed that your friend has given up his seat successively to each new comer since your arrival. He has now occupied for a moment every chair in the room except one, and I wish you'd ask him to secure that, and not suffer the next comer to take it from him. It is really hard upon him, because he gets no thanks, and I am sure he must be tired, if it is only from bobbing up and down. You can't think how it fidgets me. Now, pray ask him to sit down and hold fast."

In the latter end of June he removed from the Victualling-yard to a lodging-house in Lockyer-street, Plymouth, where he was within a

short distance of the Hoe, so remarkable for its elevated promenade and the noble prospect which it commands. To this charming spot he was several times carried in a wheeled chair, and he would sit watching the numerous vessels ever sailing in all directions, more particularly looking out for the little pleasure-boat of his friend Mr. Gyles. He had been on three or four successive occasions disappointed in not seeing it, and thwarted curiosity was (as usual with him) becoming irksome beyond endurance, when positive "articles of agreement" were entered into by the respective parties, that each, at a certain time, should be in a certain express locality. "Now, is that Gylly's boat?" said Mathews to Mrs. Gyles. Mrs. Gyles could not tell. "Humph! well, that is odd! Here's a woman don't know her husband's boat." He, however, espied the boat at last, and watched it with that ever lively and child-like interest which constituted his success as a sketcher of men and manners.

He did not, like commoner men, "get accustomed" to things. His extractive power was such that it never admitted the exhaustibility of a subject while the subject retained "a local habitation and a name." The tacks of Gyles's boat were with him so many emblems of the shifts of men when the winds of fortune and the tides of circumstance are not directly in their favour; and I have no doubt that Mathews was one of those speculators who often anticipate from accidental metaphor the nature of moral operations.

I was with him several evenings during his stay in Lockyer-street. "During his stay in Lockyer-street!" How thoughtlessly was that last sentence penned! where, then, was the spot of his next sojourn? But I anticipate my conclusion. It was not, however, a hopeless thought that he might yet be moved to London a living man. The symptoms of his malady were in some respects improved, an amendment chiefly showing itself in a more regular pulse, and the comparative infrequency of paroxysms. He was one evening enabled to take tea with his friends in full assemblage, and to give continual attention to the admirable song and guitar accompaniment of his accomplished son, in whose native talent and acquired grace he took, as well he might, an honest pride.

The evening alluded to was that of his last enjoyment. It had been arranged that Charles should go to London the following morning, as from the opinion of our medical friends no immediate danger was to be apprehended; the same anxious business that had so often disturbed my husband's serenity required, as he thought, renewed attention; moreover, Charles had some intention of preparing a drawing for the new Houses of Parliament.

The dear invalid had not been seen to smile for many days,—nay, weeks. On this evening he was tranquil, and asked to hear Mr. Wightwick and Charles play and sing to the guitar, remind-

ing Mr. Wightwick of several Italian airs he had formerly heard him sing, and pressing to hear them again, alternately requiring Charles to amuse him in a like manner by the airs he loved best, ending with his great favourite, "Jenny Jones." As Charles finished singing it, he observed, "Ah! I think if I were dead, that song would restore me to life!"*

The next morning Charles went to his father's bedside; found him, as he declared himself, better; and received his instructions upon the several points to which he desired his son to attend in London, and Charles prepared to depart. It was remarkable that on this occasion his father kissed him!—a token of affection which had been discontinued since Charles's childhood, and which was not thought of even in the anguish of the separation in 1834.

My letter to Charles after his departure will spare the painful necessity of describing anew every part of the progress of his dear father's malady during the period of his absence.

Plymouth, June 25th.

I anticipate by an hour the letter I expect to receive from you, announcing, I trust, your safe arrival in London, and I do so in order to inform you of your father's improvement since he awoke this morning, after a quiet night; induced, it is true by the opiate, yet succeeded by a more hopeful effect than from any previous draught of the kind, for he has remained until near five this afternoon without any paroxysm, even a slight one. He determined, on finding himself free from struggles, not to speak much during the day, and has written with a pencil all he wishes, &c.

Soon after my husband awoke on this day (the 25th) he asked briefly for pencil and paper, and as soon as I took it to him he wrote as follows:—

"My first desire is to write, because I wish to put on record my own impressions,—because I think a *mono*-syllable creates about an equal degree of spasmodic affection, with the exhaustion of so much breath. I therefore wish to-day to make my will* by correspondence, and Grimaldyize thus. I hope so far that I can make myself understood by action for what I want, as to questions put by yes and no,—with monosyllables, with or without paper,—the rest by having plenty of supply. Read this. Say. Say is it understood, and answer."

"No. 1," was placed in one corner of this not altogether in-

* This ballad, first sung in public in 1837 by Charles, was written by him during a sojourn in Wales in 1826, when the character of the air suggested the words.

* Known.

telligible intimation. A confusion in his mind, doubtless from the effects of the opiate, prevented his expressions being as clear as he intended; but I would not let him perceive that I was puzzled, and therefore affected perfectly to understand his meaning. He then tore up a sheet of paper into many-sized pieces, and wrote upon them from time to time; all which I answered verbally. Some time after, he put another paper into my hand.

"Continuation 1.

"My impressions are, that I took my medicine at twice (meaning the night before), and that after that period I did not awake until I was invited to coffee, which refreshed me."

I confirmed these impressions by a brief affirmative. After a short pause he again wrote—

"No. 2. Already I succeed,—God be praised, I have not yet had a slight spasm."

After another pause and some sleep, he from time to time during the day put the following scraps into my hands:—

"Three o'clock,—awoke. Still success. Has Magrath* been?—does he approve?"

"When did I see Harris† last?"

"Shaving materials."

"No more coffee."

"What's o'clock?"

Letter continued.—He has contrived to shave and wash. These operations have occupied a great part of his waking periods; but it is much to have done. He has not before even attempted it since you went; and has neither refreshed himself with water nor fresh linen; even to-day he has not been able to accomplish the latter comfort, being too fatigued with what he has done to allow me to trouble him with any other effort; yet I am cheered with this day's progress. He has broken sometimes through his *La Trappe* system upon sudden impulse. I am satisfied that he is much better; his legs, which have been bandaged, are smaller—much smaller; and when I tell you that this is the first day since Sunday that he has been inclined to take nourishment, and that he has had two cups of coffee and one of broth, besides two small slices of bread and butter, eaten with something like appetite, you will, I hope, be comforted as I am.

I assure you, my dearest Charles, all has been gloom since you went. I have repented your going more than once, and feared seriously and hourly the necessity of recalling you. Your father one morning reproached his doctors for "allowing that poor boy to leave him," saying, he should not outlive the day; indeed he was very bad. He is now certainly looking much clearer, and his eyes are bright and full.

A. M.

* Sir George Magrath, his physician. † His surgeon.

The next morning, June 26th, he took his pencil as soon he awoke, and wrote as follows: *Bulletin.*—Thursday [it was Friday], 28th, my birthday. Fifty-nine!!! Calm and beautiful night:" adding, verbally, "you always forget my birthday!" I told him he was mistaken, that his birthday was not till Sunday; and that "this was only the 26th." He considered a little, and then moved his head in acknowledgment of his mistake. In this manner, without much variation, he went on till Saturday the 27th. He awoke on that morning with a placid countenance; and in answer to my usual inquiries, said, at intervals (as he had recently felt obliged to speak), "Oh! I have had such beautiful visions!—such lovely, heavenly visions! I wish some imaginative poet, like Coleridge, or Shelley, could hear what I have seen, what a beautiful account he would give of it! O, such heavenly visions!"

(May this not have been a foretaste of what he was soon to enjoy for ever?—I am happy in so believing.) I observed to him how well he looked (he had put on, with great difficulty, a change of linen)—nay, that his appearance was youthful; and so fresh!—his complexion was glowing and his eyes bright. I placed it all to the account of his "beautiful" night and sweet dreams. I told him, playfully, "that he looked quite handsome." To my surprise and pleasure he replied, with a smile, imitating the tones and manner of John Kemble, "Go, go, you little flatterer!" I approached him with tears of joy at this unwonted sally, saying, how happy he had made me by this cheerfulness; but the very act of moving quickly towards him—the slight agitation of the air occasioned by it—affected his breathing, and he looked alarmed. I kissed his head, instead of his cheek, therefore; and afterwards placed a looking-glass upon the bed, in order to show him his improvement. He deliberately looked into it, and, with affected vanity, held up his hands and eyes in pretended admiration of his own beauty; and I was all delight and hope.

After this, the person who was latterly employed to rub his legs daily (my strength proving unequal to the force required), entered the room, and I perceived from the window a pretty white pony which he had left there. I questioned him as to its safety and strength, and planned, in the hearing of the dear sufferer, to hire it as soon as he was strong enough to mount it for exercise, which I augured he would soon be. He fixed his bright eyes upon me, but without any particular meaning that I could understand, and I was full of the con-

fidence which his improved appearance gave me, that a very few days more would find him in progress towards recovery. In the course of the afternoon, he suddenly asked, in a tone like assertion rather than a question, "Broderip has got my will?" I paused, for I had never heard of one since that made when he went first to America, and of which I now knew nothing; I thought it best to answer, "Oh! yes." He nodded his head, and seemed satisfied.* In the evening he relapsed into his usual state, and I wrote the following letter to Charles, who had been detained in town longer than he wished by indisposition:—

June 27th.

Your father remains in the same state as when I wrote last, not better; and this is what, perhaps, checks my exultation as to his improvement within the last three days. It seems to me unnatural, that when pronounced free from present symptoms of a dangerous character, no gradual strength is to be discovered. He has this morning made an effort (really a great one, poor sufferer, it has been), and succeeded in changing his linen.

Last night a violent cough came on, after he was settled for the night. This recurred frequently,—expectoration always followed it with difficulty. This I mentioned to Sir George and Mr. Harris today, and my spirits are much damped by the gravity of their manner when I gave the information. Sir George waited, in order to hear the cough and see the nature of what he brought off his chest, and when he saw it his words were not explicit to me about it. I am easily cast down in my present state, and, perhaps, unnecessarily take alarm. The dear patient certainly looks better, and his paroxysms are not only "short," but "far between" and fainter, yet there is no increase of appetite. His opiate is gradually made weaker, and yet he sleeps well. His head is sometimes wild, and he is very visionary. He asked me to read the Bible to him on Thursday, and yesterday I offered to do so again; but, after listening a few minutes he said, "It is a mockery—my head is too confused to understand it." I placed the book by his bedside, and when I returned I found him reading it. After this he seemed trying to find some place, and turned over the leaves confusedly. Seeing this, I said, "Do you want the New Testament? let me find it for you" He patted my hand gently, as it touched the book, saying, with a half smile, "I knew how to read the Bible before you were born," and I desisted.

He asks every morning, and again at night, about your letter, so write something every day till you return, as it is clear you must soon do; for our removal is, alas! distant, I believe. Your father can

* It proved that no other will than that of 1822 had ever been made, or even spoken about to his legal friend. This was afterwards found, after a long search, amongst his business papers in London.

scarcely bear the fatigue of getting up into the easy chair, and he is in perpetual perspiration from debility—sleeping, certainly, twenty hours out of the twenty-four. He does not wish to see anybody, and therefore I allow only the doctors to enter his room. I seldom leave the apartment, or the view of him from the next room with the folding-doors open; indeed, he cannot bear me to be absent a moment, and when I began this letter requested me to sit where he could see me. I was not well yesterday, and all night I feared I should be worse. To-morrow will be your dear father's birthday, when, he has reminded me, his age will be fifty-nine. He says, if I should be ill, he should sink immediately. He talks of you in the most affectionate words.

A. M.

Past nine o'clock.—Your father seems really improved since the morning, and more collected; his cough has not recurred oftener than six times to-day. He says you must write on Monday, and say when you think of being here again, and wait for our reply before you take your place. I must not ask him why he wishes this; but do you adhere to his wish.

Before writing the postscript of this letter, my husband had got up and seen a visitor (Mr. Jacobson, one of the gifted "Blue Friars," who had just arrived from London). He appeared, indeed, much better, and only complained of his legs being cold. In the course of the evening I found my spasmodic complaint increasing, and fearing it might be observed and distress him, or incapacitate me from attending him, about twelve o'clock I approached him, and kissing his head, said, "I want you to go to bed now." He closed the Bible which he had been reading, and, looking up at me, without his usual request to be allowed to remain up longer, replied meekly, "I am ready."

About a quarter-past twelve he was again in bed. I had completed all the customary arrangements in silence, and by the physician's order diluted his night-draught with water, and seen him drink it, when he gave me the kiss which said "good night," and I withdrew to the other part of the room, divided by folding-doors, which, left ajar, afforded me the means of hearing the slightest sound or intimation that he wished my presence. For though he was uneasy during the whole day, if I was not continually near him, he had latterly—doubtless from humane consideration for me, finding my eyes always upon him during the night, declared he could not sleep unless my sofa was away from his view. His little favourite, Fop, who could never be removed from the side of the bed, unless by force, was always carried with me, lest his breathing should disturb his master's rest.

I listened, as I was in the habit of doing, for some time at

the open part of the door, until I ascertained that the dear sufferer was asleep, and then threw myself upon my sofa. On this night "tired Nature" must have sunk for some minutes into a half-unconsciousness, for a sudden spring of the little animal towards the folding-doors fearfully roused me to the hearing of an unusual sound in the next room. I instantly rushed forward, and as I reached the foot of the bed, I missed the form I sought. He had fallen from the bed-chair, which always supported him, on to the side of the bed. I endeavoured to lift his head, which hung down, and replace him, but he was too heavy for me, even in the energy of my despair, to raise.—Oh! my dear, dear husband!——I knew not how they were summoned, but I found the bed soon surrounded by his physicians and other pitying spectators of my agony, as I held the dear inanimate remains in my arms, till I was at length conscious that all hope was vain, and that my best and dearest friend was gone for ever!

I was then led away, (oh! that separation!) upon being assured by the kind physicians that the final pang had been momentary. I believed what I was told, for everything near him was as I left it: the hand-bell (which he would have sounded had he been previously conscious of a change) was unmoved, the smelling-bottle, Bible, all, all as I had placed them; the only indication of voluntary action was the position of a shawl which he always spread over his bosom when he lay back to rest. This shawl was found thrust under his waistcoat in a heap, next to his heart.*

"I am ready!" Memorable words! They were his last, and they recurred to me, as I was taken from him, in a twofold sense, and ought, in some degree, to have tempered the anguish of the time, which

Nipped not the life, but the heart.

Even at this remote period I feel myself so unfit to dwell upon the mournful particulars of the event, that I am induced once more to borrow from the expressive pen which has before been a resource in this most melancholy and painful portion of my task.

Mr. Wightwick continues his account as follows:—

He only lived half an hour into his birthday; a day which, having reason to be proud of the being whom it had ushered into life, claimed the privilege of "lighting him to dusky death." The sad duty of

* During the latter part of his confinement, he wore a black velvet waistcoat under a dressing-gown, when in bed, lying without any other covering upon his chest and arms.

preparing for his funeral devolved on his long-attached friend, Mr. Henry Gyles; and, on Friday morning, the 3rd of July, his remains were consigned to the tomb. All honours that could be offered on the occasion were prondly, not less than feelingly paid, and such a general sympathy was awakened, as really seemed to betoken a national loss, The rank, intellect, and respectability of the three towns of Devonport, Stonehouse, and Plymouth, were satisfactorily represented by the pall-bearers and the numerous gentlemen who attended. The officiating clergy of the parish and the churchwardens manifested a gentleness of attention which will not be forgotten. The organist accompanied the deceased comedian to the grave with the most solemn tones of sacred harmony; and he was lowered into his tomb amid the heavy sighs and irrepressible tears—not of the *chief* mourner only. During the procession the streets were lined with spectators, yet not a sound was to be heard, and the church was found crowded in every part by sympathising spectators.

Such was the affecting end of "dear Charles Mathews," as the feeling Coleridge designated him. Had he died in London, friends more numerous, "trappings of woe" more pompous, and a train more theatrical, would doubtless have attended on his exit; but nowhere could he have been followed by friends more affectionate, nor waited on by ceremonies more truly suitable and decent than at Plymouth. Even the day seemed to take a part in the duties of the occasion; it rained until the mournful procession began to move forward, when it suddenly became dry. Still, however, veiling itself from the sun until the return of the mourners from the church, when the clouds were partially dispelled, and a gleam of sober cheerfulness admitted.

He lies in a vault in the western vestibule of the fine old church of St. Andrew at Plymouth. A man so interwoven with the public should be in such a place interred. Hundreds weekly pass his tomb in their way to prepare for that last home to which they are also hastening; and the verger who points out the interesting spot to the stranger, testifies the words of the pathetic Tristram—"not a passenger goes by without stopping to cast a look upon it, and sighing, as he walks on,

Alas, poor Yorick!"

A brief while longer, I cannot help lingering over his grave, for I knew him as a man; you, perhaps, only as an actor. I had opportunities of observing his scrupulous integrity; his affectionate and grateful attachment to those who loved him; his forgiving generosity towards those who had wronged him; and, more than all, his Christian resignation when threatened by the death which has since laid him low.

And now adieu for ever! Adieu, Charles Mathews! for the many hours of innocent and instructive amusement thou hast afforded, we proffer our gratitude; for thy purity of mind and unsullied integrity, our admiration; for thy warmth of heart, our love; for thy loss, our deep sorrow!

The concluding local notices in relation to the "last scene of all," which ends this sad "eventful history," are from other hands, and contain particulars of the last mournful ceremonies.

To the Rev. Thomas Speidell.

Plymouth, July 1st, 1835.

My dear Sir,—You have doubtless received intelligence of the mournful event which has depressed the hearts of all who ever were acquainted with Mathews. He died soon after midnight on the morning of his fifty-ninth birthday; and as soon as his new-made widow could compose her mind sufficiently to name the persons who were first to be informed of the event, I was instructed to write several letters, and amongst them, of course, one to his affectionate friend, Mr. Speidell; but, from some inadvertency, which it is now vain to explain, and which might only impugn my own discretion, your letter escaped my attention, and it only remains for me to express my regret that you should have been left to form a suspicion of neglect when you had so prominent a claim to consideration. This lapse of attention gives me, however, an opportunity of informing you how greatly the memory of our friend is honoured in this distant part of England. The Port Admiral,* the Lieutenant-Governor General, Sir Willoughby Cotton, the Commissioners of the Dockyard and of the Victualling-yard;† Col. Abernethie, the Commandant of the Marines; the Commandant of Engineers, Sir George Whitmore; the Mayor, and the Recorder, are to be his pall-bearers; and he is to be interred in a vault under the vestibule of St. Andrew's Church, Plymouth, on Friday next.

Mrs. Mathews continues in a very afflicted state, and poor Charles is not in a way to afford her more consolation than arises out of his presence, and a firm conviction of the great deliverance which it has pleased Almighty God to grant to his afflicted father.

I have the honour to be, dear Sir, yours sincerely,

Henry Gyles.

His funeral, which took place on Friday morning last, was, in its character, most grateful to his afflicted survivors and honourable to the town. Not a follower was there unprompted by feelings of affection or respect, nor was there one who wore the mourner's garb unmoved by a mourner's sorrow.

The friends of the deceased having assembled at the house of Mr. H. Gyles, in Windsor-terrace, proceeded to Lockyer-street, where the corpse remained, and the procession moved onwards to St. Andrew's Church in the following order:—

Conductors, &c.—Rev. R. Luney; Rev. C. J. Smith; Sir George Magrath, M.D.; W. S. Harris, Esq., surgeon; J. C. Cookworthy, Esq., M.D.

The Body.

Pall-bearers.

Chief Mourner—C. J. Mathews, Esq., supported on either side by Capt. Tincombe and H. Gyles, Esq.

Mourners—F. Brady, Esq.; J. Franklin, Esq.; W. Jacobson, Esq.; George Wightwick, Esq.

* Sir William Hargood. † Captain Ross and Captain Hornby.

Numerous friends and admirers of the deceased.

The procession was closed by the carriages of Admiral Sir W. Hargood, General Sir Willoughby Cotton, and Colonel Abernethie.

The churchwardens of St. Andrew's, Messrs. Bone and Linnington, evinced every possible kindness and attention in their department, and the organist, Mr. Drewitt, proved the truth of Cowper's line, "There is in souls a sympathy with sounds." The "Dead March in Saul" was the piece most appropriately selected to accompany the body to its final resting-place, and the most important of the hour's solemn duties was impressively fulfilled by the Rev. J. C. Smith, assisted by Mr. Luney, the curate of St. Andrew's Chapel.

The vault is situate in the central thoroughfare of the western vestibule of St. Andrew's Church, where a stone slab announces, with admirable simplicity, the last home of "Charles Mathews, comedian, born 28th June, 1776, died 28th June, 1835."

Mrs. Mathews and Mr. C. J. Mathews (the widow and son of the deceased) have left Plymouth, on a visit to Endsleigh-cottage, most feelingly offered for their occupation by its noble proprietors, the Duke and Duchess of Bedford.

HIS MONUMENT.

(*From a Plymouth Paper, August 4th*, 1838.)

We cannot but unite with our local contemporaries, in alluding with much gratification to the monumental tablet which has been recently erected in the vestibule of St. Andrew's Church to the memory of the great comedian. To the celebrity of the deceased we must of course attribute the peculiar interest which attaches to the "marble marked with his name," whatever may be due to Mr. Wightwick, its designer, or to Mr. Brown who has so creditably executed it.

It is in the Gothic style (as all monuments in Gothic churches ought to be), and derives no small portion of its good effect from the admirable position which has been awarded to it by the Rev. Vicar and the Churchwarden, Mr. Bone. The inscription on the tablet is as follows:—

"Near this spot are deposited the honoured remains of
CHARLES MATHEWS,
Comedian.
Born 28th June, 1776.
Died 28th June, 1835.

Not to commemorate that genius which his country acknowledged and rewarded, and men of every nation confessed; nor to record the worth which secured the respect and attachment of his many admirers and friends; but as an humble tribute to his devoted unvarying affection and indulgence, as a husband and father, this tablet is erected in sorrowing love and grateful remembrance by his bereaved wife and son."

THE END.

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